

THE YONGGOM OF NEW GUINEA:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF SORCERY, MAGIC, AND RITUAL

Stuart Kirsch

A DISSERTATION  
in  
Anthropology

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

1991



Supervisor of Dissertation



Graduate Group Chairperson

**Comment to Readers**

**Yonggom karup yom wonong yom:** Yonggom wonong yom karup  
ku kaget ipban yom, wongge ku yawat ye amop ip.

Chapter mimo, ayoop, ayoop-mim, kaning; yip korem ku  
yimen anggon mama kimingganokban. Chapter benme kung  
ku yawat kuruak ip; akmimamokban, anigat yanip, aangono  
bet andiwen.

**To other readers:** The Yonggom consider many of the  
myths and rituals described in this ethnography to be  
secret. While I have obtained their permission to  
publish this information, I ask that all those who come  
across it behave responsibly; it is for the Yonggom to  
decide who should have access to this information  
within their own society.

**Acknowledgements**

For financial support I am indebted to the National Science Foundation for Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant #BNS-8709138, Dr. William H. Davenport, Principal Investigator; the United States Department of Education for a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Grant; Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society, for a Grant-in-Aid of Research; The English-Speaking Union, Philadelphia Branch, for the Robert L. Johnson award for research and study; The Explorers Club for a grant from their Exploration Fund; the Anthropology Department of the University of Pennsylvania for support of a preliminary field reconnaissance; The University Museum of Philadelphia for its support of ethnographic collections, and the University of Pennsylvania for a fellowship to complete my dissertation after I returned from the field. As my final obligation to these institutions, I submit that I alone bear the responsibility for any errors of fact, judgement, or interpretation that appear in this dissertation.

I am grateful to Dr. William H. Davenport for his support as chair of my dissertation committee. He has contributed much to my education as an anthropologist, and in particular to my thinking on metaphors and natural images. Dr. Davenport also arranged for me to make ethnographic collections in the field, and that work substantially broadened my knowledge of the Yonggom. I

would also like to thank the other members of my committee at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Igor Kopytoff and Dr. Arjun Appadurai, for their support of my research and their careful reading of and helpful comments on this dissertation.

Dr. Edward L. Schieffelin served as both a member of my dissertation committee and an external reader of the dissertation after he left Philadelphia for the University College of London. His influence on my approach to ethnography is evident throughout the dissertation, and his comments on earlier drafts of the dissertation contributed substantially to their clarification.

A number of anthropologists gave me advice and information regarding the choice of a field site and commented on my research at various stages of the process, including Mary Ayres, Jim Flanagan, Dan Jorgenson, Bruce Knauff, Fitz John Porter Poole, Ric Thompson, and Don Tuzin. Debhora Battaglia deserves special mention for her intellectual guidance, as well as for her habit of never letting an opportunity pass without doing something to further my career.

I would also like to thank my colleagues who work in the Fly-Digul Plateau. Rob Welsch was the first to suggest research in Western Province and over the years has provided much advice and assistance. Mark Busse arranged my field site through an introduction to the Woia family, and has

continued to support my work. Pim Schoorl, my predecessor in studying the Yonggom (or Muyu), set high standards for me to follow, and graciously made the English translation of his thesis available to me before it was published.

I also received help from a number of fellow students at the University of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, including Steve Albert, Eytan Bercovitch, Bill Donner, Mary Hancock, Peter Just, Lisa Klopfer, and Michael Speirs. The members of the PARSS seminar on ethnography at the University of Pennsylvania commented helpfully on a preliminary draft of Chapter 10. Dr. Francis E. Johnston, Chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of Pennsylvania, found me office space in which to write and helped solve a number of logistical and financial problems that arose while I was a student. I would also like to thank Siobhan Brady for the illustrations and Shannon McPherron for the maps that appear in this dissertation.

Many people helped me in an official capacity in Papua New Guinea, including Jacob Simet and Andrew Strathern during their respective tenures as director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies; Laura Zimmer as faculty liason at the University of Papua New Guinea; Pamela Swadling, curator of prehistory at the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery; the Premier, Secretary, and staff of the Provincial Government of Western Province; Hohore Kerekere of the Department of Primary Industry in Kiunga;

and Father Giles Cote and others of the Montfort Catholic Mission, especially the late Father André Bouchard.

A number of scholars in Papua New Guinea shared their insight on issues of common interest, including Colin Filer, Wari Iamo, David King, Rosemary Preston, and Budai Topari. Lissant Bolton kindly made it possible for me to have access to photographs of objects from the collections of the Australia National Museum. I also benefitted from interaction with several contemporaries in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Papua New Guinea, including Linus Digim'rina and Jo Mangi.

On numerous occasions in Papua New Guinea I was forced to rely on the kindness of strangers, and I thank Lis Doane and Rob Milot, Siggy and Fanziska Esskuche, Julie and Lee Nelson, Nicole Polier, Catherine Poole and Ian Robinson, Bea Winn, and the irrepressible Keith Zang for their hospitality. In Port Moresby, I often availed myself of Laura Zimmer's hospitality and friendship, as well as that of David King.

I thank my family for their interest and patience during my graduate career and my time spent overseas. Their support was, and continues to be, an important source of my own strength. I thank Janet Richards for her heroic visit to the village (where she made a big hit) hard on the heels of directing her own project in Egypt, and more generally for the gift of her company over the years. I would also

like to thank Ian and Karen Schwartz for inviting me to join their honeymoon cruise of the Sepik River. I also thank Drs. Caryn Bern, Harvey Rubin, and Martin Wolfe for their numerous and patient efforts to de-bug my system.

I want to thank the members of a second family as well. Among my fondest memories of Papua New Guinea are of evenings spent with the Woia family in Kiunga, joking and laughing as I related gossip from the village. I am still saddened when I think of the family members who have died since my first visit in 1986, including my *ena*, my *arom* Dako Watan, and my *daman* Emma. This thesis is dedicated to their memory.

In Dome village, I shared a house, domestic chores, and many afternoons on the river and in the rain forest with Buka Nandun and David Kanong. Buka was also a superlative research assistant. Finally and most importantly, I owe thanks to all the people of Dome, Iogi, the refugee camps, the Kiunga "corners," and the other villages I visited. I can mention by name only a few of those who helped me, including Atani, Awaken, Bumok, Buru, Dabuna, Dingari, Dokyap, Dumne, Elias, Eretin, Eweyok, Joana, Johannis, Justin, Kanong, Karupiban, *ne yigoro* Katambu, Kati, Kibinok, Kobarara, Kurim, Kutem, Nem, Nengganop, Nonggok, Nonggong, Soter, Wanmut, and Wurin. *Yip korem ku amun, oh.*

## ABSTRACT

THE YONGGOM OF NEW GUINEA:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF SORCERY, MAGIC AND RITUAL

STUART KIRSCH

WILLIAM H. DAVENPORT

This is an ethnography of the Yonggom, a group of about 15,000 people subsisting on hunting and horticulture in the upper Fly-Digul plateau of south central New Guinea. The study is based on two years of field research in Papua New Guinea and is organized as an account of Yonggom sorcery, magic, and cult ritual.

Through the examination of these institutions, the thesis explores three important processes of Yonggom culture. Indeterminacy is a strategic resource in social relations and the construction of meaning. In sorcery, indeterminate results of divination limit violent responses against sorcerers. Ambiguous objects and words of uncertain meaning are considered to have magical power. The yawat cult is organized recursively and the transformations of its arguments establishes the indeterminacy of meaning.

Another process is based on the idea of unrequited reciprocity, which the Yonggom interpret as a challenge to one's humanity. In myths about unrequited reciprocity, persons who are refused food become animals. Unrequited reciprocity is also seen as motivating acts of sorcery. It

is the theme of yawat cult myth and ritual, which have power through their ability to resolve the challenges posed to the social order by unrequited reciprocity. Yonggom ideas about "cargo" express concerns about reciprocity and the kinds of relationships imposed by colonial, post-colonial, and capitalist systems.

The third process involves the creation of meaning through the metaphorical supplementation of natural images. This process is illustrated in the interpretation of dreams, in patterns of distinguishing persons and groups, and in magic. Natural images are drawn from a range of sensory experience, and in the yawat cult, numinous sounds and dangerous smells convey ideas about sex, gender, and fertility.

The thesis takes a reflexive point of view when considering issues associated with the representation of culture and its presentation to the anthropologist, including questions about the "use" of magic, the experience of participation in yawat, and contemporaneous innovations on yawat myths about redemption or salvation.

## Table of Contents

	Page
Comment to Readers .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abstract .....	viii
Table of Contents .....	x
List of Maps, Figures, and Drawings .....	xii
Preface .....	xiii
<b>Part One: The Yonggom</b>	
Chapter One: Setting .....	1
Chapter Two: History .....	32
Chapter Three: Village and Fieldwork .....	59
<b>Part Two: Yonggom Sorcery</b>	
Chapter Four: Yonggom Sorcery .....	73
Chapter Five: The Emotional Context of Sorcery .....	117
<b>Part Three: Yonggom Magic</b>	
Chapter Six: Natural Images .....	171
Chapter Seven: Magic and Metaphor .....	208
Chapter Eight: Techniques & Effects of Yonggom Magic .	232
Chapter Nine: Yonggom Magic and the "Impossible" .....	250
<b>Part Four: Cult and Cargo</b>	
Chapter Ten: The Yawat Cult .....	264
Chapter Eleven: Gender and Recursion in Yawat .....	293
Chapter Twelve: Cult and Cargo .....	317
Conclusions .....	336

**Table of Contents (Continued)**

	<b>Page</b>
Appendix One: Annual Temperature and Rainfall .....	341
Appendix Two: Birds Species Mentioned in the Text ....	342
Appendix Three: Primary Cultigens .....	344
Bibliography .....	346
Index .....	365

**Lists of Maps, Figures, Tables and Drawings**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Maps</b>	
1. Yonggom Villages .....	3
2. The Fly-Digul Plateau .....	28
<b>Figures</b>	
1. The Ok Language Family .....	7
2. Ethnozoological Classification .....	223
3. Symbolism of Yawat Sound-Producing Instruments....	303
<b>Tables</b>	
1. Yonggom Village Census, 1980 .....	50
2. Village and Refugee Camp Census, 1988 .....	61
3. Signs from Pig-Killing Divination .....	99
4. Yonggom Exonyms .....	186
5. <i>Kubup</i> Food Taboos .....	279
<b>Drawings</b>	
1. Shell Valuables .....	19
2. Penis Sheaths .....	194
3. Cassowary and Cassowary Magic Talisman .....	219
4. Yawat Sound-Producing Instruments - A .....	297
5. Yawat Sound-Producing Instruments - B .....	298

**Preface**

This is an ethnography of the Yonggom, a group of about 15,000 people subsisting on hunting and horticulture in the upper Fly-Digul plateau of south central New Guinea. The study is based on two years of field research in Papua New Guinea and is organized as an account of Yonggom sorcery, magic, and cult ritual.

The text is divided into four parts. The first section describes Yonggom society and history, providing the background information necessary for an understanding of the remainder of the text. In Chapter One, I describe Yonggom society and its relationship to the natural environment. In Chapter Two, I examine the major currents of historical change leading up to the period of my fieldwork. This discussion makes use of oral history, material from colonial archives, and the work of the Dutch government anthropologist J.W. Schoorl, who worked among the Yonggom (or Muyu) in Netherlands New Guinea in the 1950's. I pay particular attention to contrasting European and Yonggom views of colonial encounters. In Chapter Three I describe Dome, the village in which I was based during my fieldwork. I also discuss the methods employed in the study and different aspects of my relationships with the people in the village and the nearby refugee camp.

Sorcery and emotions are the themes of the second section. In Chapter Four, I describe the techniques of

sorcery that the Yonggom say are used to cause illness and death, and the strategies that the Yonggom employ in order to attribute responsibility for acts of sorcery. I suggest that the motivating force for explanations of sorcery is the emotional response to illness and death, and that inference about sorcery refers to Yonggom ideas about human character, emotion, and motivation. In Chapter Five, I discuss Yonggom emotions in relation to sorcery and show how they are organized through reciprocity.

Yonggom magic is the subject of the third section. In Chapter Six, I describe how the Yonggom make use of metaphors that supplement natural images, a process exhibited in interpretations of dreams, in myths about animals and people, in patterns of distinguishing persons and groups, in the relationship between language and created objects, and in the categorization of sensory experience. In Chapter Seven, I examine the relationship between magic and nature, and show how magic is based on the metaphorical supplementation of natural images. In Chapter Eight, I consider whether Yonggom magic is better defined in terms of the techniques that it uses or the kinds of effects that it is intended to have. In Chapter Nine, I examine the problem of Yonggom magic "for the impossible," and through consideration of the question of the "use" of magic, suggest that such magic is apocraphyl.

The Yonggom *yawat* cult and ideas about "cargo" are the subject of the final section. The two are connected through their shared concerns about reciprocity, as well as through innovations on cult myths in response to changing economic and political conditions. I discuss the *yawat* cult in Chapter Ten and Chapter Eleven; Yonggom cargo activities are the subject of Chapter Twelve.

In Chapter Ten I present and analyze the central myth of *yawat* and its dramatic enactment in cult ritual. The power of the myth lies in its ability to resolve the challenge posed to the social order by unrequited reciprocity. The myth is also the charter for regional pig feasts known as *arat*, which make possible the exchange of the shell valuables (and today, cash) used in marriage transactions. Finally, I suggest that the myth can be seen as a story of redemption or salvation.

In Chapter Eleven, I consider ideas about sex, gender, and fertility within the context of *yawaṭ*. I examine the revelation of numinous sound-producing instruments and a myth that attributes the source of these instruments to women. Both in name and by means of an analogy based on smell, the *yawat* cult is compared to menstruation. *Yawat* produces meaning by taking itself as its own object and I argue that the ritual is organized recursively.

In Chapter Twelve, I examine Yonggom ideas about "cargo" from a historical perspective. I show that

reciprocity is the unifying theme of different manifestations of ideas about "cargo" through time. I treat Yonggom cargo myths as critiques of Yonggom alienation from broader economic and political processes and as a form of resistance against the kinds of relationships imposed by colonial, post-colonial, and capitalist systems.

Several important processes of Yonggom culture emerge in the analysis of this material and I refer briefly to them here in order to alert the reader to their significance. Ambiguity, uncertainty, and indeterminacy are strategic resources in social relations and the construction of meaning. I consider a number of examples of this in the text, including how the indeterminate results of divination limit violent response against sorcerers, how ambiguous objects and words of uncertain meaning are considered to have magical power, and how older men control yawat initiates through the manipulation of an inconsistent set of food taboos.

Another process is based on the idea of unrequited reciprocity, which the Yonggom interpret as a challenge to one's humanity. In myths about unrequited reciprocity, persons who are refused food become animals. Unrequited reciprocity is also seen as motivating acts of sorcery. It is the focus of yawat cult myth and ritual, as well as in ideas about cargo.

The third process involves the creation of meaning through the metaphorical supplementation of natural images. This process is illustrated in Chapter Six, as well as the subsequent discussion of magic. Natural images are drawn from a range of sensory experience, and in the yawat cult, numinous sounds and dangerous smells convey ideas about sex, gender, and fertility.

The thesis takes a reflexive point of view when considering issues associated with the representation of culture and its presentation to the anthropologist, including questions about the "use" of magic, the experience of participation in yawat, and contemporaneous innovations on yawat myths about redemption or salvation.

## Chapter One: The Yonggom

We are one people; we share language, customs, and work.

-- a Yonggom man

### Introduction

The people known as the Yonggom, or Muyu, inhabit the broad plains of the upper Fly-Digul Plateau in south central New Guinea. Muyu is the name given by the Dutch colonial administration of Netherlands New Guinea to the population west of the border between Irian Jaya (Indonesia) and Papua New Guinea, while the people east of the border refer to themselves as the Yonggom. 'Muyu' is also the local name of a tributary of the Digul River, and 'Yonggom' is the local name of a linguistic variant spoken in the Ok Tedi River area.<sup>1</sup>

Although most accounts of the people and languages of the area refer to the Yonggom and the Muyu as if they are two distinct populations, this is an artifact of the border. The Yonggom and the Muyu are in reality one group of people. Differences which do exist within the population as a whole do not correspond to the arbitrary demarcation by the border. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the term 'Yonggom' to refer to populations on either side of the border.

---

<sup>1</sup>Alternative spellings of Muyu include Moejoe and Muju; for Yonggom, Yongom and Yongkom.

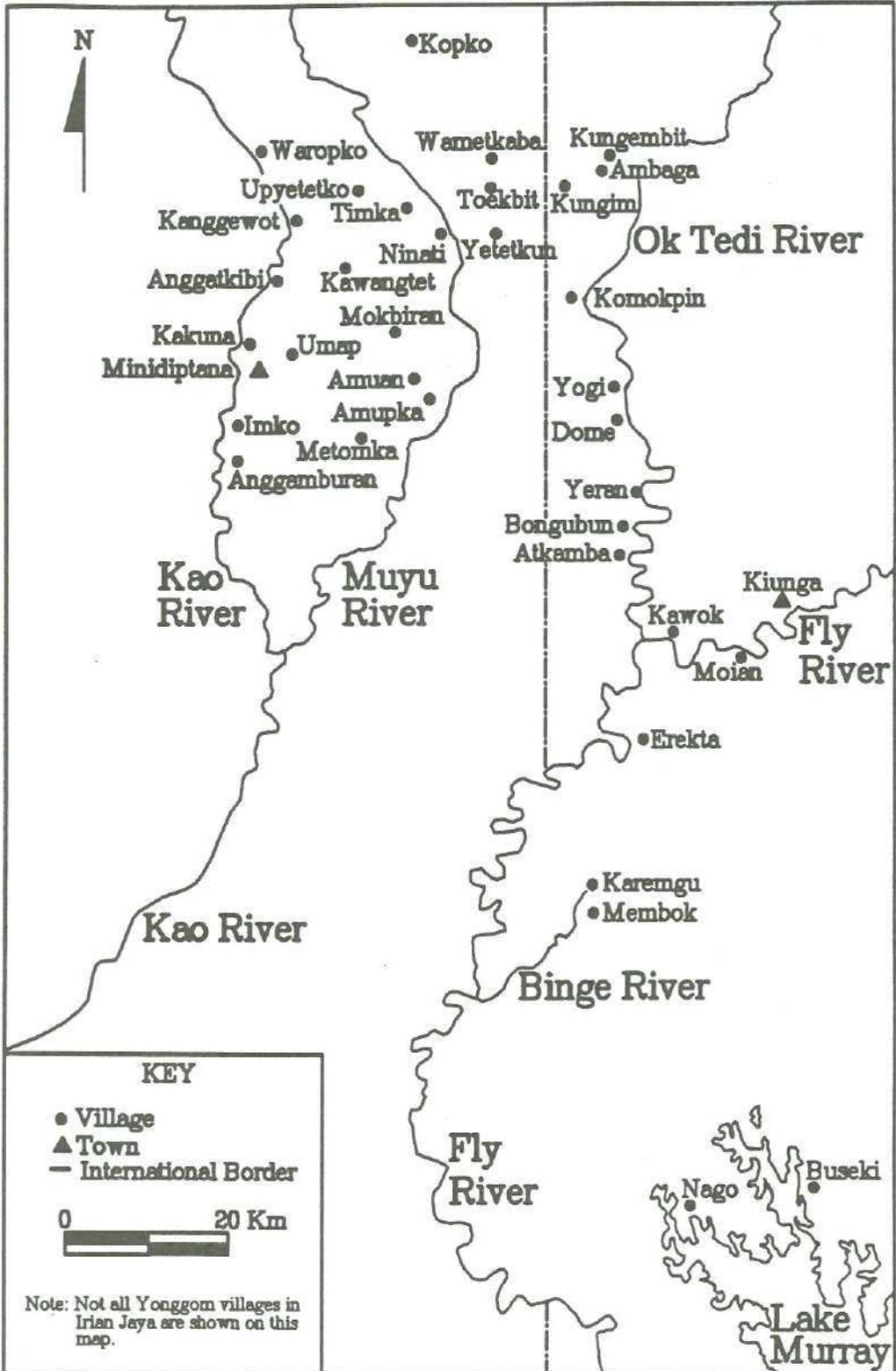
The territory currently inhabited by the Yonggom extends south from the foothills of the Star Mountains to the northern shore of Lake Murray. The region, shown in Map 1, is bounded to the west by the Kao (or Kowo) River, and to the east by the Ok Tedi (or Alice) River and the town of Kiunga along the Fly. The total area of this region is approximately 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

The majority of the Yonggom live west of the border. The most recent census of this region, taken in 1956, lists a population of 12,223 (Schoorl n.d.). The population density of the area is less than 3/km<sup>2</sup>, although in the corridor between the villages of Ninati and Woropko, population density reaches 17/km<sup>2</sup> (*ibid*).

The 1980 census of Western Province, Papua New Guinea, lists a population of 2,823 Yonggom in eighteen villages. There were also about 488 Yonggom living in Kiunga at the time of the census (Student Research 1980:40). Assuming a stable population size, the combined population on both sides of the border would be about 15,500, although it is likely that the numbers west of the border have increased somewhat since 1956.

In this chapter, I describe the environment of the North Fly-Digul Plateau and Yonggom subsistence strategies. I present a synopsis of Yonggom settlement patterns, social organization, and exchange relations as they existed prior to the establishment of an effective colonial presence

Map 1: Yonggom Villages



during the 1950's. I also describe exchange networks among the Yonggom and discuss regional dynamics. In the following chapter, I will discuss the Yonggom from a historical perspective.

### Language

Current classifications suggest that the Yonggom speak three different languages (e.g. Healey 1964, Voorhoeve 1975, Silzer and Heikkinen 1984). These languages have been referred to as North Kati (or Kati-Ninati), South Kati (also Digoleesch or Kati-Metomka), and Yonggom. This classification, however, is based on limited data and appears to be inconsistent.<sup>2</sup> Austen (1923:340), after the first Australian patrol up the Ok Tedi River, commented that, "The tribes along the western bank [of the Ok Tedi] and north to the Ok Birim, and perhaps as far west as the Disul [Digul] river in Dutch New Guinea, all speak a similar language but with dialectic variations." Voorhoeve (1975:383) notes that Healey (1964) "reports that there is a fair degree of mutual intelligibility between Yonggom and Northern Kati," and that he obtained "similar information... regarding Yonggom and Southern Kati." He suggests that Yonggom "may turn out to be a dialect" of either Southern or

---

<sup>2</sup>Published sources on North Kati include Boelaars (1950), Drabbe (1954, 1959), Schoorl (1957), and Galis (1955). For South Kati, see Geurtjens (1933), Galis (1955), Drabbe (1954, 1959). For Yonggom, see Austen (1922c, 1925) and Healey (1964).

Northern Kati (*ibid*: 383). Similarly, Silzer and Heikkinen (1984) point out that North Kati and Yonggom may be "two names for the same language."

The Yonggom say they speak a single language (*weng mimo*) which is composed of a number of named dialects that are, for the most part, mutually intelligible. The naming of the dialects is complicated by two factors: (1) there has been extensive population movement since pacification, so that the dialects are not coterminous with discrete territories, and (2) the Yonggom names for the different dialects are sometimes used as directional terms, so that a name which connotes "the language spoken by the people to the north" is applied differently depending upon the position of the speaker. Despite these difficulties, I propose the following provisional classification of Yonggom dialects, based on a loose consensus among the speakers of the language:

- (1) **Kataut**: Spoken only in the northern-most Muyu area in Irian Jaya, from Kopko to the north.
- (2) **Middle Yonggom**: Spoken in the northern villages in Papua New Guinea, as well as the Lake Murray villages (Nago and Buseki). Spoken in Irian Jaya from Kawanget to Metomka (Corresponds with South Kati).
- (3) **Kabom or Kagaip**: In Papua New Guinea, spoken from Yogi village south to Atkamba (including Dome) and in Kawok and Moian. Extends northwest into Irian Jaya to Ninati (Corresponds with North Kati).
- (4) **Ok Pari**: Spoken in the Papua New Guinea villages of Erehta, Membok, and Karengu. Also spoken in Irian Jaya from Mindiptanah south along the Kao River.

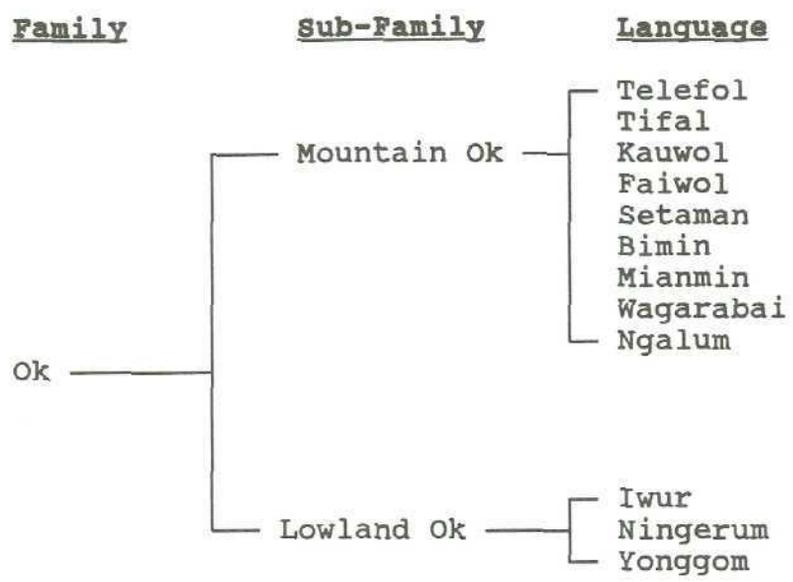
The Yonggom recognize and name additional localized speech varieties as well. For example, the language spoken by the people who lived along the Ok Tedi River between Dome and Atkamba prior to pacification is called Derian, and is recognized as a variety of what I have referred to as Middle Yonggom. Certain language varieties are also more difficult for some people to understand than others; for example, a Kataut speaker finds it difficult to communicate with a speaker of Ok Pari. More detailed linguistic study would probably show that Yonggom language is composed of a dialect chain running roughly north to south. Currently the language is undergoing change in the direction of Middle Yonggom.

Yonggom, Ningerum, and Iwur are members of the Lowland Ok Language Sub-Family (Voorhoeve 1975b).<sup>3</sup> Together with the Mountain Ok languages, spoken in the mountains to the north, these languages comprise the Ok Language Family. This family is part of the Trans-New Guinea Phylum of Non-Austronesian Languages (McElhanon and Voorhoeve 1970). The taxonomic relationships within the Ok languages is shown in Figure 1.

---

<sup>3</sup>The language known as Iwur (or Iwoer) is said to be intelligible to Kataut speakers (Voorhoeve 1975:383).

Figure 1: The Ok Language Family



Based in part on information from Voorhoeve (1975b).

---

### The Environment of the North Fly-Digul Plateau

Although the Fly-Digul Plateau extends several hundred miles into the interior of the mountainous island of New Guinea, it averages only ten to ninety meters in elevation. (Paijmans 1971:10). The town of Kiunga, 300 km from the south coast and 800 km up the Fly River, is only fifty meters above sea level (*ibid*:44).<sup>4</sup>

The plateau is crossed by the Fly and Digul river systems, which have incised deep channels into the alluvial

---

<sup>4</sup>The towns of Kiunga and Mindiptanah were founded at the furthest navigable points of the Fly and Digul Rivers.

plain. Both the Fly and the Digul are broad, slow-moving rivers. Frequent course changes have scarred the surrounding terrain with oxbows, backed-up lakes, and swamps. A range of low hills east of the border separates the Ok Tedi-Fly watershed from that of the Muyu-Digul.

The climate is wet and humid, with rainfall ranging from four to seven meters a year, increasing with proximity to the central mountain ranges (Paijmans *et al.* 1971:49). The rainfall regimes are heavy and intermediate; there is no true dry season (see Appendix One). Heavy rainfall in the mountains to the north, in some cases exceeding ten meters annually, leads to frequent flooding downstream.

Temperatures are consistently high, with sultry days and warm nights (*ibid*:149). Mean daily temperatures range from a high of 88F to a low of 72F and only rarely does the temperature climb above 97F or drop below 65F (*ibid*:149). There is only slight temperature variation throughout the year; the months May through September are on average 4F cooler (see Appendix One).

The runoff from the heavy rains has eroded the plateau, producing a pattern of ridges and valleys ranging in elevation from ten to thirty meters. The summit levels of the ridges are very even, forming a near-perfect plain with a consistent southern slope (Loffler 1977:17-19).

The closed rain forest forms a largely unbroken cover over the area. The canopy averages thirty meters in height,

while trees emerging from the canopy may reach fifty meters. While the understory and shrub layers are dense, the ground cover is not (Womersley 1978:103-104). In the narrow, swampy valleys, the tree cover is composed of sago palms and woodland swamp forest. River channels are filled with sand, gravel, and alluvial soil washed down from the mountains.

Wildlife is abundant throughout the area. Birds are especially numerous and colorful.<sup>5</sup> The larger marsupials are tree-dwellers, including the cuscus, the bandicoot, and the tree kangaroo. Bats are the only true mammals indigenous to the area, although the rain forest has long been home to feral pigs. The rivers and streams are populated by many species of fish, and crayfish are plentiful as well. Reptiles are a locally diverse order, the largest of which are fresh water crocodiles, monitor lizards, and turtles. Venomous snakes in the area include the Death Adder and the Papuan Black. Insects are numerous, varied, and omnipresent. Some carry arbo-viruses, including malaria and filariasis, which pose significant threats to human populations.

### **Subsistence**

The basic staple of the Yonggom diet is sago (om), a starch harvested from the pith of the Metroxylon palm. Sago palms thrive in the narrow, swampy valleys and sago stands

---

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix 2.

are maintained through selective harvest, replanting, and thinning.

Sago production (*om arume*) requires, on the average, several days of intensive labor every fortnight. Men usually cut down the palm and split its hard outer bark. Until steel tools were introduced, adzes (*da*) with polished stone blades were used for this task. Women pound or scrape the soft interior of the tree, separating the starch-bearing pith. A wooden sago pounder (*om mangga*) with a concave, burned-in pounding surface, is used for this task; more recently, the tools have often been fitted with a piece of metal pipe. The pith is carried to a sluice built close to a source of water. Water is poured over the pith, which is then beaten with a stick and squeezed, separating the starch from the fibers. The water carries the starch into another trough below where it settles, eventually accumulating into a solid block weighing six or eight kilos.

Bananas (*yum*) are another staple food, and the Yonggom cultivate more than a dozen named varieties. Bananas are grown using swidden or slash and burn horticulture. Trees are left on the ground after being felled, but the shrub layer and undergrowth are cleared away. The labor required to make a garden has been greatly reduced since the replacement of stone adzes and sago bark knives (*om bat kono*) with steel. The refuse is left to dry and then burned. Using a pointed digging stick (*arot*), banana

suckers from other gardens are planted around the fallen tree trunks.

Under the thin topsoil is heavy clay. With the exception of land along the river banks, made rich by alluvial soil washed down from the mountains, the yields from banana plants drop off dramatically two or three years after maturity. Garden land is usually left fallow for at least a decade.

While bananas are the main crop, many other plants are also grown, including sugar cane, greens, and lowland pitpit.<sup>6</sup> Tobacco has long been cultivated, and many other crops have been introduced more recently, including cucumbers, pumpkin, and pineapple. Papaya trees, which mature rapidly, are also commonly planted in gardens today.

In some gardens a small plot is set aside for the cultivation of various tropical tubers, including taro, yams, sweet potato, and cassava (a recent introduction). Root crops are not a daily staple and they are grown in small quantities. Even though root crops are often disturbed by both wild and domestic pigs, the plots are rarely fenced.

Pandanus, breadfruit, and okari trees may be planted close to garden sites, where they benefit from greater exposure to sunlight, although they generally do not bear fruit until after the gardens have been abandoned. Fruit

---

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix 3.

and nut trees are also planted beside houses and along trails through the rain forest. Coconuts, introduced about fifty years ago, are now plentiful in the villages.

Wild forest products contribute significantly to the Yonggom diet. Plant and tree foods include seasonal fruits and berries, nuts, palm hearts, and flower buds. Among the animal resources that are gathered are small fish and crayfish, bird and turtle eggs, marsupial mice, lizards, turtles, molluscs, sago grubs and other larvae, cicadas, and occasionally other insects such as ants and spiders. Most of the foods gathered in the rain forest are consumed in situ.

Wild boars, cassowary, hornbill, cuscus, and bandicoot are the most common large game animals. Men hunt alone or in pairs, using black palm bows (*ananggap*) strung with bamboo. Arrow shafts are made from reeds and tipped with bamboo, cassowary bone, or palm wood. Arrows with metal points have recently become common, and young men hunt small game using rubber slingshots. Pigs and cassowaries are caught in snare and deadfall traps. Dogs are taken on hunting expeditions to flush out game. Fish are caught by using traps, blocking streams, using damar torches or flashlights at night, or by poisoning a stream with derris root.

Pig husbandry is common, although large numbers of pigs are not raised except in preparation for pig feasts known as

arat. Pigs are left to forage during the day and are fed from household scraps when they return in the evening. In addition to pig feasts, pigs are killed for certain rituals and to provide meat for exchange. Cassowary chicks, captured when the father of the brood is snared (the male cassowary tends its young), are also raised for meat and exchange. Chickens have been a part of the domestic economy for about twenty-five years.

#### **Settlement Patterns and Property Rights**

Resources such as garden sites, planted trees, hunting grounds, streams, and certain useful trees, such as those producing damar, are protected by rules of ownership (Schoorl 1970). Property rights are held an individual in association with his clan. Both the clan and its associated territory are referred to as *ambip kin*.

Before the establishment of villages during the colonial period, members of a clan, usually brothers or cousins, would settle together, forming a homestead or small hamlet. A typical settlement consisted of two or three houses (*ambip*) built five to twenty meters above the ground. A settlement also might include a lookout tower as high as thirty meters, from which one could see over the forest canopy (Austen 1922b:136-37). Twenty to forty persons would live in a settlement of this size.

Although there were some hamlets along the Ok Tedi and Muyu Rivers, most settlements were located away from the rivers in the interior of the rain forest. These settlements were connected by a network of tracks which usually ran parallel to the creeks and rivers which cross-cut the region. Where the trails intersected with the larger rivers, canoes were left on the bank for travelers. Long distance travel by canoe was made difficult by frequent and dangerous flooding.

The rectangular houses built by the Yonggom were internally divided into male and female sections by a wall that had several openings. There were several sunken hearths on each side of the house. A man slept beside his own hearth, together with any sons old enough to be separated from their mother. Married women slept beside their own hearth with their unmarried daughters and young sons. While women prepared most of their family's food, passing the men's share through the windows in the partition, men also cooked for themselves on their own hearths.

The entrance to the house was through a trap door atop a long notched pole which could be withdrawn into the house. Floors were constructed in several layers as protection against arrows. Walls were made of sago branches bound with cane. Roofs, constructed to overlap at their 'A'-shaped peaks, were made of sago leaves sewn onto sago branches and

lashed to the rafters so that one panel was overlain by the next.

Typically a clan was divided into several segments, each living in a separate hamlet within a radius of several kilometers.<sup>7</sup> After marriage, the couple ideally resided patrilocally. At death, a man's property was divided among his sons. A daughter could retain usufruct rights to her father's property and cultivate that land with her husband. A man with no sons might transfer land to a grandson through his daughter.

Among the Yonggom there is still considerable flexibility in the distribution of land rights to non-agnates. Usufruct may be granted to a friend, affine, or refugee from another settlement. Continued use of the land may result in full ownership. After one or two generations, the descendants of non-agnates may be considered more closely affiliated with the local clan than their original kin group. This strategy of incorporation is pursued by men with a surplus of land, who adopt young men from other clans. While the adoptees may only have use rights of the land, their descendants generally acquire clan membership as well as full property rights.

---

<sup>7</sup>Schoorl (n.d.) refers to these groups as "lineages." I prefer the term "clan," as genealogical knowledge is limited in depth and among the larger of these groups, relationships between members are putative rather than specified.

In the course of his lifetime, a Yonggom man acquires detailed knowledge of the resources of his land. He learns the location of useful trees and plants. He knows the fruit stands where birds come to feed and where to look for pig or cassowary tracks. He is familiar with the places where he may catch fish, crayfish, and turtles. He maintains a network of trails, camping places, and catchments for drinking water. He plants trees and makes gardens. He fells trees to build houses and canoes. The landscape is gradually transformed into a reflection of his activities. This relationship represents the process of inscription (Battaglia n.d.b) of his personal history on the environment.

### **Marriage**

Yonggom clans are exogamous. Before, many marriages were arranged with nearby clan segments in order to consolidate land holdings and reinforce alliances. Since the establishment of villages by colonial authorities (See Chapter 2), these considerations have become less important. Although there is a stated preference for matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, few marriages fit this pattern.

Marriage choices reflect the preference for a hard-working mate. One way in which unmarried women may secure a marriage partner is to initiate a sexual relationship with

an unmarried man. If she is persistent, the man and both sets of parents may agree to the marriage.

Divorce is infrequent, though couples with strained relations will often live apart for long periods of time. Polygynous marriages, now infrequent owing to Christian influence, were most commonly arranged with widows, when a couple were childless, or when the children from a first wife had reached adulthood. Polygyny is generally considered to be troublesome because of possible conflicts among the wives. If a widow chooses not to re-marry, her husband's kin are obligated to provide her with assistance. Given the high death rate, children are often adopted and raised by their father's kin. Adoption is also common when a woman has several dependent children.

The first step leading to a marriage is a series of discussions between the families of the man and woman, culminating in a gift of tobacco (*aup kowip*) to the bride's family, indicating a commitment to the marriage. At the same time, a payment of goods known as *muk od*, meaning "breast wealth" or "milk wealth," is made to the bride's mother. At this point, the prospective bride is asked whether her parents should accept the gifts. If she answers negatively, then the gifts will be returned and the marriage plans abandoned. If she gives a positive response, then the two families will negotiate the value of the bridewealth

(*wonong konit*), which is paid in installments to the bride's father over a number of years.

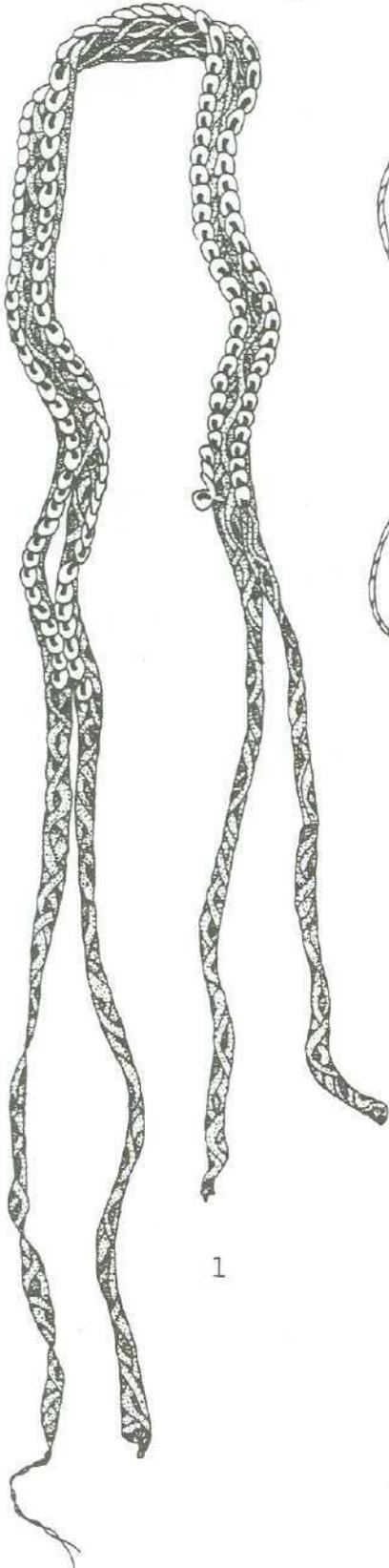
Until traditional valuables were totally displaced by foreign currency, the most important component of the bridewealth was *od*, long strings of cowrie shells tied together or sewn onto a knotted belt. *Od* are also the central valuable for transactions during the regional arat pig feasts. Other, less important, valuables included in the bridewealth were *yinam*, basket shells (*Nassa* sp.) strung in rows onto headbands, *wam*, curved sections of large bailer shells, and *yinip*, strings of dogs' teeth (See Drawing 1).

In addition to engagement gifts of tobacco, "breast wealth," and bridewealth, certain clans demand payment of valuables known as *dana kibi* from the father of a child to his wife's kin. *Dana kibi* compensates for the membership of the child in the father's clan. All of these payments constitute what Welsch (n.d.b) has referred to as a "social mortgage" which can never be settled. The requested payments are usually so high that the debts are an extended, if not permanent, state of affairs. This has significant implications for sorcery attributions (see Chapter 4).

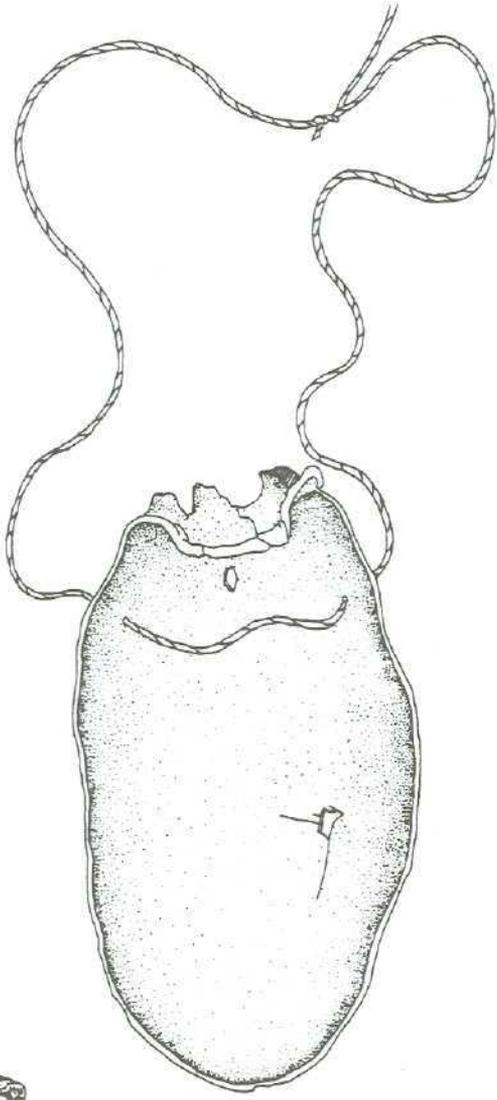
### **Politics**

As in many lowland New Guinea societies, the Yonggom do not have big men who dominate the local political and economic scene (cf: Godelier and Strathern 1991). Younger

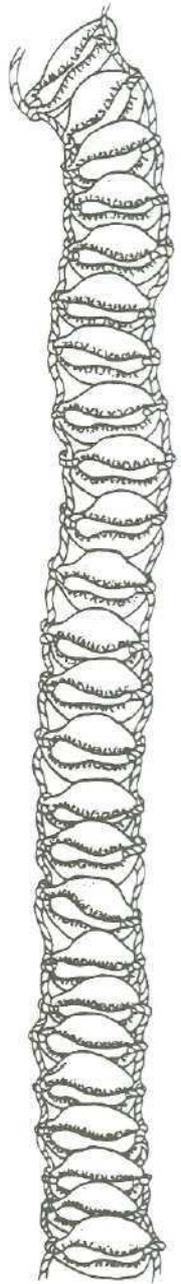
Drawing 1: Yonggom Shell Valuables



1



2



3

**Labels for Drawing 1**

1. String of basket or nassa shells,  
called *yinam*. (University Museum,  
89-17-39). Purchased from Nem Kowop,  
Meremko clan, Dome village.
  
2. Bailor shell, called *wam*. (University  
Museum, 89-17-42). Purchased from Ambrosius  
Nibung, Ninati clan, Ninati village, Irian Jaya  
(residing in Yogi Refugee camp).
  
3. Cowrie shell valuables, called *od*. Purchased from  
Dabuna Amandu, Wambiran Clan, Dome village.

men tend to rely on the guidance of older, more experienced men known as *aamgono*. While *aamgono* do not adopt generalized leadership roles, they are called upon to direct negotiations concerning matters of compensation or bridewealth. Welsch (1991) refers to similar leaders among the neighboring Ningerum as "influential men." In the words of Kirine Yandit (n.d.), a Yonggom student at the Christian Learning and Teaching Center, while "being a hard worker who is wealthy in terms of pigs and shell valuables" is a prerequisite of leadership, other characteristics of a leader include "being an 'easy-going' man able to listen to kin members, identify with them and give advice when needed; being hospitable; [being] able to speak up for the good of kinsmen in meetings; and [acting] with confidence." A man's influence stems less from wealth or physical prowess than from his demonstration of *inamen amun*, "good intentions," or "good thinking."

Although the term *aamgono* is used in a general way to refer to elderly men, old women, and ancestors, not all *aamgono* have political influence. Some older men become disinterested in local politics and retreat to their garden houses, and the opinions of ineffectual old men may be routinely ignored during decision-making. Younger men may occupy temporary, situation-specific leadership roles as a result of their reputation for success in hunting, for

organizing feasts, or, before the imposition of peace, for leading raids.

Every Yonggom homestead was perpetually under the threat of siege. Raids from other Yonggom settlements were carried out in reprisal for previous assaults or in response to acts of sorcery. Usually the intended victim was chosen in advance. The entire house might be placed under siege, or the attackers might ambush the intended victim, sometimes after entering his house in the guise of a friendly visit. The body of someone accused of sorcery would be dismembered, carried away in string bags, baked in tree bark over a slow fire like a pig, and consumed (cf: Schoorl n.d.) The cycle of raid and retribution could be halted by the negotiation of a truce and the payment of cowrie shell valuables, pigs, cassowaries, or women.

The Yonggom were also vulnerable to the headhunting raids of the people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau, the Bian Marind and Boazi, whom the Yonggom referred to as *Yirik* or *Chirik*. The Bian Marind and Boazi (see below) were capable of mounting large expeditions against their neighbors, travelling in groups of forty or fifty canoes (Austen 1922a:132). One motivation for these raids was to obtain stone, which is not found on the alluvial plains of the Middle Fly, for making clubs (Busse 1987:50). To find stone along the Ok Tedi, the Boazi would have had to travel

more than 25 km upstream from the Fly, past the present-day village of Atkamba.

The threat of attack from other Yonggom and from the people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau influenced Yonggom settlement patterns in three ways: (1) they built elevated houses for defense, (2) for the most part, they took up residence in the rain forest interior, rather than along the rivers, where they would be more vulnerable to attack, and (3) they avoided the unsettled area or no-man's land to the south, separating them from the people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau (Schoorl n.d., Busse 1987).

#### **The Local Exchange Sphere: Arat Pig Feasts**

Regional integration among the Yonggom, as elsewhere in Melanesia, was based on exchange. Arat pig feasts are regional in scope, attracting guests from distant villages who offer cowrie shell valuables (or, today, currency) in exchange for pork. The pigs have been raised by the sponsor, his relatives, and people who wish to sell their pigs at his feast. While the feasts vary in size, the largest may take several years to organize and involve scores of pigs and hundreds of people. I attended an arat at Kawok village in 1987 at which forty-eight pigs were killed and approximately five hundred people were in attendance. An arat held at Kamokpin village in 1988 was

much smaller; only five pigs were killed and very few people from outside the village attended.

Arat pig feasts are generally held in compounds or feast grounds constructed for the occasion. Located within walking distance from the host settlement, the compounds contain a large feast house, cages for pigs, and a long, narrow plaza flanked on either side with shelters for guests. For the feast at Kawok village, the plaza was more than one hundred meters long. It is the responsibility of the host clan to build the complex, as well as supply every shelter with firewood, sago, and drinking water.

Guests arrive a day or two before the feast, but do not immediately enter the compound; initially they camp in the surrounding rain forest. The night before the feast begins, a small number of men gather in the feast house for the "call and response" song ceremony known as *kumut*. At daybreak, the men kill the caged pigs with arrows. That afternoon the visitors dance into the compound two or three abreast, in a line that stretches into the forest.<sup>8</sup> The guests have blackened their skin with charcoal and the men have painted their calves with red clay topped by a white stripe.

After everyone has entered the compound, the visitors stand by the shelters where they will spend the night

---

<sup>8</sup>The processional dance is known as *ketmom* and is performed on other occasions as well.

cooking, eating, and visiting. The pigs, cut in half, are silently paraded around the compound, led by a man carrying a torch lit from a fire that has been kept burning since the construction of the shelters. Afterwards the meat is distributed by the hosts to the guests and redistributed among them. The bulk of the meat is cooked overnight in tree bark while the evening is filled with dancing; most guests leave the following dawn, their stringbags filled with cooked pork.

Arat pig feasts are usually held in conjunction with yawat cult rituals which take place in the nearby rain forest in the days before the killing of the pigs. Since arat is regional in participation, yawat is as well, giving the ritual regional continuity that it might otherwise lack. One myth is the charter for both arat and yawat (the myth and yawat are discussed at length in Chapter 10).

There are three main points of contrast between arat and the pig feasts of the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea (cf: e.g., Meggitt 1974, Strathern 1971, Brown 1978). While the feasts of the Western Highlands operate according to the principle of delayed exchange, recipients of pork at arat are ideally expected to make an immediate return prestation of valuables (of cowrie shells, or, today, currency). While exchange in the Western Highlands involves return in kind (i.e., return of a live pig or cooked pork), among the Yonggom reciprocity is indirect, involving the

substitution of shell valuables for pork. The third difference is that even though arat feasts are organized by an individual with the assistance of his clan members and other associates, the purpose of the feast is not to gain renown: the traditional aim of arat is to acquire scarce and valuable *od* cowrie shell valuables which are used in the payment of bridewealth and other important transactions.

In ideal form, a person selling pork will call upon other persons from whom he purchased pork at previous arat feasts, requesting that they purchase a share of the meat he wishes to sell. At a feast in Kungim village for which I recorded the major transactions, however, this ideal was realized only in a minority of the cases. The pig was more likely to have been purchased from its owner by an agnatic relative, who then redistributed the meat in smaller portions to others. Many other transactions were between affines or persons who were related matrilineally.

Pork was most commonly redistributed to relatives or given to persons from whom one had received an unreciprocated gift of pork in the past. Several pigs were given to sons-in-law as informal return gifts for bridewealth payments, and two pigs were given as reciprocal gifts between brothers-in-law. Other pork was cut up for re-sale. The practice of selling small pieces of meat was common in the past as well, using lesser valuables such as dogs' teeth and basket shells (*yinam*).

### Regional Patterns and Processes

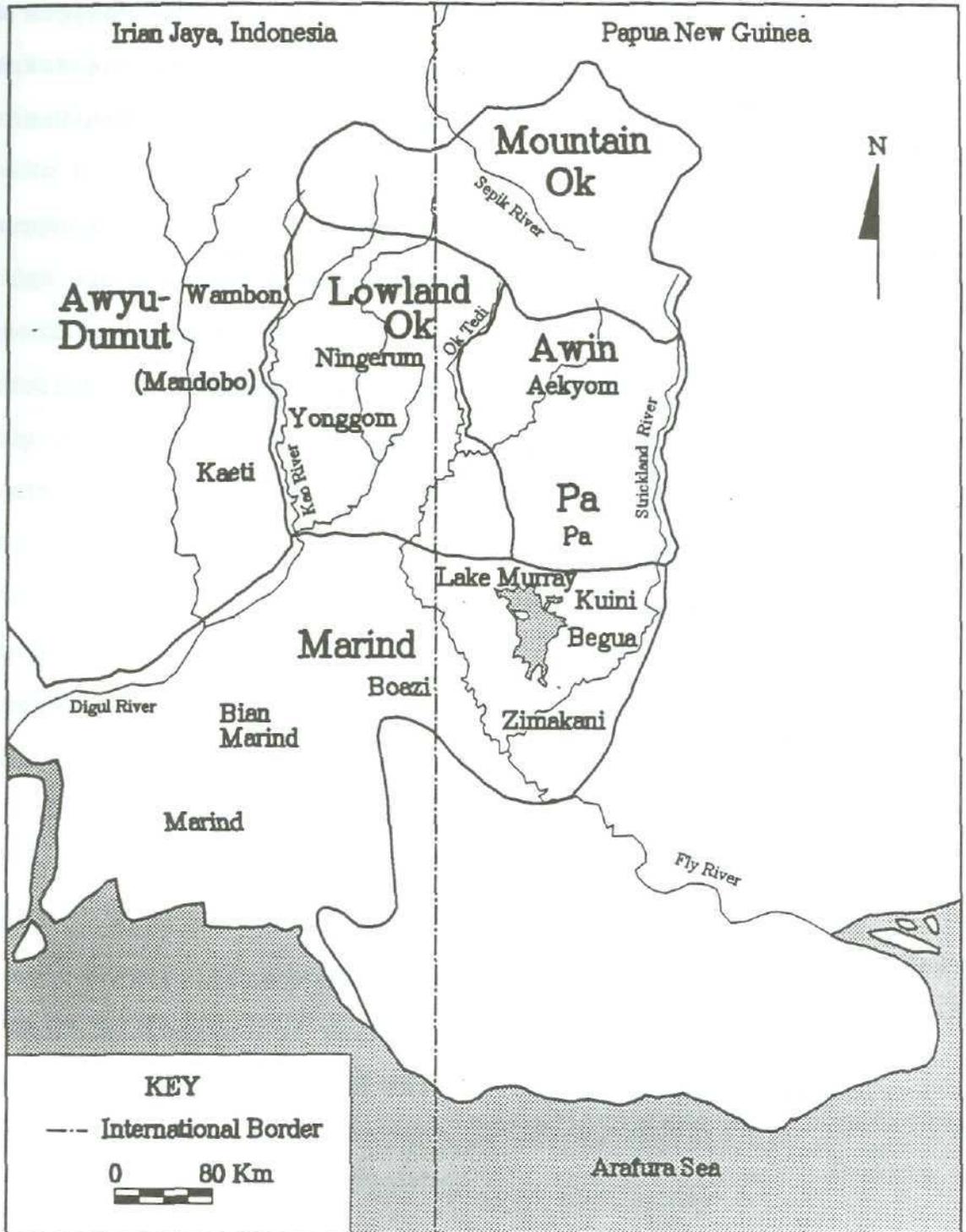
The location of peoples of the North Fly-Digul Plateau is shown in Map 2. The Mandobo, Ningerum, and Awin (Aekyom) inhabit environments similar to that of the Yonggom, and have similar subsistence strategies. All depend on gathering-hunting exploitation of forest and riverine resources, sago-harvesting, horticultural production of bananas and tubers (in varying proportion according to soil and altitude), and pig husbandry. The technologies they employ are also similar: they hunt with black palm bows and reed arrows, make netted string bags as well as plaited baskets for sago, and process sago using wooden (or basalt) pounders and washing troughs. There are other similarities in material culture as well: men typically wear seed phallocrypts and cane belts (though gourd phallocrypts are more common in the northern and western areas), while women wear two-piece bulrush skirts. They build sturdy houses that until recently were elevated for defensive purposes (cf: Busse 1987, Welsch n.d.b).<sup>9</sup>

Before the introduction of currency, all of the people of the North Fly-Digul Plateau were involved in the exchange of shell valuables. The Mandobo and the Ningerum used

---

<sup>9</sup>The languages spoken on the North Fly-Digul Plateau belong to three language families, Ok, Awyu-Dumut, and Awin-Pa, but are all members of the Central and South New Guinea Stock. In contrast, the languages spoken in the Middle Fly-Digul, including Boazi and Bian Marind, are part of the Marind Stock (McElhanon and Voorhoeve 1970).

Map 2: People of the Fly-Digul Plateau



cowrie shells in exchange transactions and also sponsored pig feasts similar to those of the Yonggom. The Yonggom and the Mandobo also share myths about the origin of the feasts and their association with male cult activities (Den Haan 1955).

Ningerum feasts are smaller than those of the Yonggom or Mandobo, with fewer participants and pigs, and are held more frequently (Welsch n.d.b). Ningerum feasts are also associated with ghosts of deceased male relatives (Welsch 1991), which may be the case among northern Yonggom (e.g. around Kungim) as well. According to Schoorl (n.d.), the Ningerum adopted the use of cowrie shells as exchange valuables from the Yonggom.

The Awin (or Aekyom) living along the eastern bank of the Ok Tedi River entered into the Yonggom exchange sphere by participating in pig feasts, and by accepting and using cowrie shells in marriage exchanges with the Yonggom. Elsewhere among the Awin, the only shell valuables in circulation were bailor shell pendants and strings of basket shells traded from the mountains (Depew 1987:60). Welsch (n.d.a) has referred to the expanding acceptance of shell valuables among the people of the North Fly-Digul Plateau as the "Muyu-ization" of the region.

The no-man's land between the Yonggom and their neighbors of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau, including the Boazi and the Bian Marind, marks both an ecological and

cultural divide (Busse 1987:66ff.). The ecological transition is from rain forest in the north to open forest, savannah, and swamps in the south. The people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau build simple houses without raised floors, make plaited baskets but not string bags, hunt using bamboo bows, rely on the less-intensive technique of processing sago with their feet, and are less dependent upon their gardens than their northern neighbors. The societies of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau have dual organization and sister exchange marriage; they also raise few pigs and do not exchange shell valuables. The people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau share a corpus of culture-hero myths, which the Marind call Dema (van Baal 1966). Their predatory head-hunting raids were responsible for the no-man's land or buffer zone between them and the people of the North Fly-Digul Plateau.

Of equal or greater ethnographic interest are the continuities between the Yonggom and Ningerum and the people of the mountains to the north, the Mountain Ok or Min, who have been given considerable anthropological attention (e.g. Barth 1975 and 1987, Bercovitch 1989a, Brumbaugh 1980, Craig and Hyndman 1990, Gardner 1980, Hyndman 1979, Jones 1980, Jorgenson 1981, Morren 1986, Poole 1976, and Wheatcroft 1976). Mountain Ok languages and Yonggom are not mutually intelligible, but the frequency of cognates is high (e.g. min means "people," and the Yonggom cognate is *man*). The

two areas have very different environments and subsistence patterns; in the mountains, root crops (taro and sweet potatoes) take the place of sago, which grows only in the lowlands, as the major staple. For the most part, Mountain Ok villages are larger than pre-colonial Yonggom homesteads; their houses are also smaller and are built on short pilings. There are some similarities in material culture, however, including string bags (though the border designs differ), arrows (bows are traded into the highlands from the North Fly-Digul Plateau), and drums; Min men also wear gourd penis sheaths like those of the northern Yonggom and the Mandobo (Craig 1988).

The Min share a regional complex of male cults and cult houses, as well as a corpus of myths about the female ancestor hero Afek. Unlike Yonggom cult activity, which takes place in temporary shelters in the rain forest, Min cult rituals are held in established cult houses constructed in the villages. Min cults are hierarchical, and men continue to pass through different stages of the cult until they are old men, whereas the Yonggom cult lacks ritual hierarchy beyond the initial introduction to the cult. Although Min cults are based in villages, like their Yonggom counterparts, they do involve regional participation. There are many similar ideas in the two areas concerning sorcery and witchcraft, which strongly influence interpersonal interaction in all Ok-speaking societies.

## Chapter Two: History and Change

First white men came and gave us trousers. Then the government came and told us to live in villages. After that the Church came and gave us the rules to live by in the villages.

-- periods of historical change among the Yonggom

### First Contact

More than a century ago, the Italian explorer and naturalist Luigi Maria D'Albertis led the first Western expedition to penetrate the interior of the Fly-Digul plateau (D'Albertis 1880). D'Albertis and his crew aboard the Neva steamed 930 km up the Fly River before turning back. It was on the return journey that D'Albertis took note of the Ok Tedi River and ordered the launch to enter this tributary of the Fly.

One night in early July of 1876, the Neva anchored beside an island in the middle of the Ok Tedi. The next morning a group of five or six Yonggom men appeared on the shore. They stared at the ship with evident curiosity (*ibid*:122). D'Albertis, exhausted from the journey and ill with fever, sat on board and watched the men through his binoculars. Suddenly one of the men turned away from the ship and slapped the back of his thigh. Interpreting the gesture as an insult, the temperamental D'Albertis burst into anger (Goode 1977:175). The men disappeared briefly into the forest; when they later returned for another look

at the ship, D'Albertis ordered his engineer to fire an exploding rocket over their heads (op cit:123).

While D'Albertis' journey established the Fly River as an avenue of exploration, it had no immediate impact on the Yonggom. D'Albertis' vain and hostile salvo was forgotten. Nearly fifteen years would pass before the next major expedition up the Fly River; it was led by Sir William MacGregor, Administrator for British New Guinea. And it would take nearly a century to find the source of the gold and copper that the Neva's engineer, Lawrence Hargrave, panned from the Ok Tedi (Goode 1977:176).

When the Fly River and its tributaries were added to the maps of British New Guinea, the Ok Tedi had been renamed the Alice. Though describing the river as "largely dried up and full of mud," D'Albertis had named it after a "fair friend" of the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales (Jackson 1982:1). MacGregor's expedition up the Fly bypassed the Ok Tedi, but gave the name D'Albertis Junction to the confluence of the Fly and the Ok Tedi.

### **Birds of Paradise**

At sunset one evening along the Ok Tedi, D'Albertis witnessed five adult birds of paradise crossing the river, and described the experience,

The last rays of sun gilded the long yellow feathers of their sides for an instant. Never until to-day have I been able to contemplate the magnificence of this bird... [in flight] (1880:120).

The following day, the crew of the Neva returned from a foray into the rain forest with a "magnificent specimen of Paradisaea apoda," the Greater Bird of Paradise (ibid:121). When D'Albertis brought his bird of paradise specimens back to Europe and published his notes on the expedition, this ultimately had a greater effect on the Yonggom than the exploding rocket he fired over their heads, for it was the pursuit of birds of paradise that opened up the interior of the Fly-Digul Plateau to the West.

Birds of paradise have been the subject of aesthetic interest and scientific curiosity in Europe since 1522, when Spanish ships returned from an expedition to the Moluccas with several bird of paradise skins in addition to their cargo of cloves (Konrad et al. 1975:13). Portuguese sailors later brought home birds of paradise which had been traded to Amboina and Banda from the Aru islands. When these specimens reached naturalists in Europe, they were given the name Paradisaea apoda, the "footless" birds of paradise, because the Aru islanders had prepared the skins by cutting off their wings and legs (ibid:14). The richly-colored plumes and unusual anatomy of these birds captivated the imagination of Europe, and it was suggested that the "footless" bird of paradise was capable of remaining constantly in flight, eternally suspended between heaven and earth (ibid:14-15).

By the nineteenth century, naturalists still knew little about birds of paradise, but with the age of exploration came opportunities to collect specimens first-hand. Among the naturalists pursuing birds of paradise was Alfred Wallace (Wallace 1862), who later became well known for his independent development of the principle of natural selection. During an earlier trip to the west coast of New Guinea, D'Albertis had identified a new species of bird of paradise, which he named Paradisaea raggiana after his friend the Marquis Raggi of Genoa (Goode 1977:55). This finding helped secure his zoological reputation as well as the financial backing for the journey up the Fly River.

Ultimately what opened up the Fly-Digul Plateau to exploration was not science but fashion. The gorgeous plumes of the bird of paradise came to be held in high esteem by the women of Europe as decorations for their hats. From 1905 until 1920, an estimated 30-80,000 bird of paradise skins were transported from New Guinea to the feather auctions of Paris, London, and Amsterdam, where they brought prices high enough to encourage European, Australian, Malaysian, Ambonese, and Timorese hunters to seek their fortunes in New Guinea (Schoorl n.d.). One of the areas to which the hunters ventured was the upper Fly-Digul Plateau.

**The Hunters: Ono Dapit**

Since hunting was banned in the Australian Territory of Papua, but not in Netherlands New Guinea, the bird of paradise hunters reached the Fly-Digul Plateau via Merauke and the Digul River. They traveled north along the Digul and then the Muyu River, eventually leaving their boats to walk across the border towards the Ok Tedi River. The Yonggom remember the bird hunters as the first non-Melanesian people they had seen. They called them *ono dapit*, after *ono*, the Yonggom name for the Greater and Raggiana birds of paradise. The name *ono dapit* is still occasionally used to refer to Europeans and Southeast Asians.

On the whole, the Yonggom speak positively of their relations with these hunters. The hunters set up camps outside existing settlements and were led in their hunting by local guides. The hunters paid well for the birds that they took, providing land-owners with steel axes and knives for each skin. These were among the first steel tools to reach the area and they were extremely valuable, for they significantly reduced the labor involved in making gardens and building houses, among other tasks. The hunters also traded tobacco and white porcelain beads for foodstuffs. The beads were fashioned into headbands known as *pipit*, probably the source of the term *dapit*.

The two species of bird of paradise hunted on the plateau were Raggiana, with red, ruddy tail plumes, and the Greater with yellow-orange plumes.<sup>1</sup> The hunting season ran from April to October, when the male birds were in full plumage for mating (Schoorl n.d.). During mating season, a dozen or more mature males will regularly congregate in a traditionally-used canopy tree and participate in communal courtship displays (Beehler 1989). The only efficient strategy for hunting these birds in large numbers is to find their display tree. The bird of paradise hunters thus needed the assistance of the local people who knew the location of the display trees on their land.

The first administration posts on the plateau were established by the Dutch at the turn of the century in order to control the predatory head-hunting of the Marind (van der Veur 1966). In order to monitor the bird of paradise trade, the Dutch built a government station at Assike, south of the confluence of the Digul and Kao Rivers (Schoorl n.d.). Busse (1987:142) suggests that the bird of paradise trade may have encouraged the people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau to enter into a truce with each other, thus freeing them to intensify their raids on the Yonggom. After the unexplained death of two European bird of paradise hunters in the Middle Fly (Anonymous 1921), an Australian police

---

<sup>1</sup>The two may be conspecific in the region (Beehler et al. 1986:223).

station was temporarily established on a small island in the Ok Tedi River, opposite a Yonggom hamlet known as Wukpit (Austen 1922d:2).<sup>2</sup> The "friendly disposition" of the Yonggom towards the Australians who established the station was attributed to their familiarity with bird of paradise hunters (1922e:1).

Eventually conservation pressures in Europe brought about an end to the plume trade (Swadling n.d.); in 1926 bird of paradise hunting became illegal in Dutch New Guinea as well, and by 1928 hunting had ceased (Schoorl n.d.).

#### **Colonial Impressions**

The first government officers and other early visitors to the north plateau were impressed by the basketry-work rattan cuirasses worn by the Yonggom and their neighbors. Known by the Yonggom as *yirim*, these cane vests offered protection against arrows fired during raids or fighting. Although similar cuirasses are well known from elsewhere in Oceania, their distribution on mainland Melanesia was limited. The first cuirass collected from New Guinea was taken from a Yonggom village by D'Albertis in 1876:

One very important object only had been left behind in one of these houses. I say very important, because, so far as I know, it is the first one found in New Guinea. It consists of a cuirass or armour ingeniously made of rattang (sic) (1880:125).

---

<sup>2</sup>Wukpit is just south of the present-day village of Dome, where I lived during my fieldwork.

In 1913, the Honorable J.H.P. Murray, on patrol near D'Albertis Junction, took note of the cuirasses, describing them as

...solid pieces of armour, apparently arrow-proof, light and serviceable, readily slipped on or off, protecting both front and back, and reaching below the waist... fitted to the body so as to keep up without shoulder-straps, and to cover all but the upper part of the chest, while leaving free play to the arms... To put them on and take them off the natives slipped them over their feet (cited in Murray and Ray, 1918:41).

Several years later the ethnologist Haddon proposed that the presence of rattan cuirasses in the north coast of New Guinea and their absence in the middle and lower Fly indicated that the cuirass wearers had settled along the Ok Tedi after migrating across the mountain ranges from the northeast (Haddon 1916). The Australian patrol officer Leo Austen traded for a cuirass in 1922, and recorded its Yonggom name (Austen 1922b:138). During his tenure as Administrator of Papua, Sir William MacGregor donated a rattan cuirass from the North Fly to the Australian Museum in Sydney (Lissant Bolton p.c.). The American botanist Brandes acquired a cuirass from the upper plateau during an expedition to Papua and New Guinea to collect varieties of sugar cane in 1927-28. A photograph of the cuirass collected by Brandes collected was included in his National Geographic article about the expedition (Brandes 1929), while the cuirass itself was donated to the Smithsonian Institute. Reisenfeld (1947) later revised Haddon's (1916) thesis, suggesting that the "cuirass-wearers" could have

come from either the northeast or the northwest. During the early colonial period, the rattan cuirasses were considered the distinguishing feature of the people of the North Fly-Digul Plateau.

The first government officers and other early visitors to the North Fly-Digul Plateau were also impressed by the houses built by the Yonggom and Awin (Aekyom). D'Albertis took note of a house that, in his estimation,

...deserves special mention, on account of being built on a tree, so that its floor is nearly fifty feet above the level of the ground (1880:125).

After his 1913 patrol, Murray commented that the houses:

were remarkable, and unlike any I have seen elsewhere, for they were built in, or rather round, trees, and yet differed from ordinary tree houses in the fact that they were also supported by piles. ...the tree trunk is used as a support and the branches are not used at all; in fact, in those which I saw the branches had been lopped off (cited in Murray and Ray 1918:41).

Austen (1922b:136) also described the houses in considerable detail. Brandes included two photographs of Yonggom or Awin houses in his National Geographic article, the captions for which read, "Like huge birdhouses on poles are these pygmy dwellings" (1929:289), and "Pygmy tree-houses built 60 feet above the ground" (ibid:291). Much like the rattan cuirasses, the tall tree houses were considered a distinguishing feature of the North Fly-Digul Plateau.

Many of the government officers and other visitors to the plateau made collections of artifacts. Their collections reflected a bias towards weaponry, particularly

the rattan cuirass, ground-stone clubs, wooden fighting clubs, black palm bows, arrows tipped with wood and bone, and plaited bracers or wrist cuffs. The collections thus tended to reinforce the popular Western view of the "savage" Papuan. One example of this bias is the consistent misidentification of sharpened cassowary bone implements as "bone daggers," whereas they are not weapons, but household utensils used to process pandanus fruit. The red-brown stains found on the bones are not from blood, but from the red fruit of the lowland pandanus.

Even the more complete collections were poorly documented. As a part of J. Ward Williams' 1935 expedition to the headwaters of the Fly and Sepik Rivers in search of gold, Flt. Lieutenant Stuart Campbell collected objects from the area around D'Albertis Junction, the confluence of the Ok Tedi River and the Fly. Among the objects he collected were string bags, canoe paddles, cassowary feather headbands, a conical fish trap, a drum, a wooden club, a marsupial tooth drill, women's bulrush skirts, and men's mango seed penis sheaths. Campbell's collection was donated to the Australian Museum; Williams made a comparable collection for the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History (Lissant Bolton p.c.). Campbell referred to the people of the upper Fly River as a "tree-dwelling people, a race distinct in every way from the inhabitants of the mid Fly" (Kienzle and Campbell 1938:466). Although Campbell

distinguished between the "Karwoks" (the Yonggom Kawok clan), the "Ok-Tedis" (the Yonggom living on the west bank of the river), and the "Awins," he neglected to record the provenience of the objects he collected or to document how they were used.

The early explorers of the plateau were thus apt to characterize the Yonggom by their material culture, to make collections that emphasized weaponry and reinforced their own vision of native savagery, and to collect other objects with little regard for their context. The one exception was Austen, the first Australian government officer to patrol the Ok Tedi River, who recommended that study of the Yonggom would be of "... immense value from an anthropological point of view... for these people are distinctly interesting and different from any other natives of the known parts of the Western Division" (1922e:2).

### **The Yonggom View of Colonization**

The Yonggom enjoy telling stories about the awkwardness of their early interaction with government officers. Some of the stories they tell are generic tales of misunderstanding which could have taken place anywhere in New Guinea. One story is about a man who stole a leather shoe and tried to make a meal of it. Another story relates how paper currency was misunderstood and used as cigarette paper for tobacco.

Other stories about these early interactions are particular to the Yonggom. One popular story is about a government officer who spoke to a group of Yonggom in Police Motu, a coastal lingua franca they did not know. The patrol officer gave the men some tobacco and said, Kuku ania, the Motu words for "smoke this." The Yonggom neither recognized the tobacco they were given nor understood what the officer had said. The word ania, however, is close to the Yonggom word *animan*, which means food, so the men started to eat the tobacco.

According to the story, the patrol officer laughed at the men for eating tobacco and said oi be kawakawa, which means "you must be crazy." The Yonggom people thought that he was asking for *kawakyop* or breadfruit seeds, so several men went and collected the seeds. When they presented the seeds to the patrol officer, he laughed even harder than before, exclaiming that the Yonggom were kawakawa mumukan, or "truly crazy." The climax of the story is that the Yonggom men assumed that the patrol officer was asking them for *mumukyop*, the seeds from the *mumuk* tree, so they went off into the forest to collect the seeds for him.

Many stories relate the experience of being recruited as a carrier for a government patrol. These stories are usually told as great farces; typically the patrol officer storms into the village and collars the narrator, forcing him to leave behind a particularly appetizing meal he had

been cooking. Whereas colonial memoirs generally praise the strength and endurance of their carriers, the Yonggom stories relate with comic horror the great loads that they were forced to carry.

In one story, a Yonggom man was chewing betel when a patrol officer arrived in the village and asked him a question. The Yonggom man was afraid to answer the patrol officer because his mouth was full of the red mixture. When the patrol officer received no response, he became angry and started shouting at the man, who became even more intimidated. Finally the patrol officer lost his temper and slapped the man across the face. When the patrol officer saw the stream of red betelnut juice spurt out from the man's mouth, he was horrified, for he assumed that his blow had drawn blood. He apologized profusely and gave the man a steel axe and some other goods.

More serious accounts of government patrols refer to unfair recruiting practices and harsh conditions. Men were sometimes forced to go on patrol despite being sick or injured. Others were forced to abandon sick wives or children, or to go on patrol while still in mourning for close relatives. Carriers describe the backaches and other injuries they suffered, and those who went on patrol into the mountains told of how cold they were at night.

### **Pacification and Migration**

By the late 1930's, the people of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau had ceased their predatory head-hunting raids on the Yonggom (Busse 1987:157). One important consequence of the pacification of the Middle Fly-Digul Plateau was that the Yonggom were able to migrate into the no-man's land to the south. There were three major population movements during the 1930's and 1940's: (1) west of the border, several settlements were established in the Muting Lakes region, although they were later abandoned because of land rights disputes, (2) the Lake Murray villages of Nago and Buseki were established by speakers of the Yonggom (South Kati) dialect from the Kungim-Ambaga area, and (3) speakers of the Ok Pari dialect from the Mindiptanah region migrated to the southeast, establishing settlements in the area of the present-day villages of Membok, Erehta, and Karengu.

### **World War Two**

During World War II, the Australians withdrew from Western Province, taking with them a number of Yonggom men in their mid-twenties to work as laborers in Port Moresby. The Dutch maintained their outposts on the upper Digul throughout the war and established an internment camp in Tanah Merah for Indonesian political dissidents (Osbourne 1985). It was their internment in Tanah Merah that later led Indonesian political leaders to claim that their new

nation should include western New Guinea. The prisoners also introduced tuberculosis into the region (Fritzsche 1988); the disease is now endemic among the Yonggom.

After the war, the Australians re-opened their administrative posts in Lake Murray and Kiunga. The internment camp at Tanah Merah was closed and Mindiptanah (on the Kao River) emerged as the most important commercial center of the region.

#### **A Government Anthropologist among the Yonggom**

In 1954, J.W. Schoorl, a Dutch administrative officer trained in anthropology, spent six months among the Yonggom (whom he called Muyu) conducting research commissioned by J. van Baal, the governor of Netherlands New Guinea. Schoorl surveyed a number of villages and selected two (Kawangtet and Yibi) upon which to concentrate his efforts. He used Malay to communicate, although he compiled a short vocabulary of Yonggom terms (1957). His thesis (1957) has recently been translated into English (n.d.) as Culture and Culture Change in the Muyu Area.

In addition to describing social structure, land tenure, religion, and political organization, Schoorl examined the relationship between the colonial administration and the local people. He evaluated the government proposal to replace cowrie shell valuables with currency and ultimately recommended against such

intervention. Schoorl stressed four features of Yonggom culture: (1) the emphasis on the individual and the great independence from kin, (2) considerable mobility, especially for the purpose of trade, (3) an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, which is related to sorcery and sorcery attributions, and (4) a strong interest in personal property and the acquisition of ot (or od) cowrie shell valuables. Schoorl has also published articles on land tenure (1970), exchange (1976), cargo cults (1976), and mobility and migration (1988).

#### **Resettlement**

Colonial administrations on both sides of the border had a policy of consolidating dispersed hamlets into nucleated villages. This occurred earlier on the Dutch side; by 1950, there were fifty-nine Yonggom villages in Netherlands New Guinea (Schoorl n.d.). Strict regulations about village absenteeism created conflicts for the villagers, who needed to leave their villages to work in remote gardens, to hunt on their own land, and to keep domesticated pigs from disturbing gardens close to the village. Treatment of the Yonggom was inconsistent, alternating between tolerance and strong-handed discipline, depending on the current administrator (*ibid*).

In Australian territory, resettlement took place in two phases. Border patrols between 1955-57 led to the

establishment of a number of largely single-clan villages. Before 1967, these settlements ranged in size from 5-60 adults (Territory of Papua and New Guinea 1967). In the mid-1960's, Yonggom living in Papua New Guinea were directed to form larger, multi-clan settlements (see Table 1). With the exception of Kungim, the settlements in the border area were relocated along the Ok Tedi River. The stated rationale behind the resettlement was to increase access to health care and education, and to facilitate participation in the democratic process. As an inducement to relocation, a rubber development program was established, even though the patrol officers in charge recognized that rubber would probably never become profitable, given the expense and difficulty of transportation of unprocessed latex (Fitzpatrick 1969, Creedy 1968; cf: Jackson 1979).

The new settlements were built according to Australian ideas of what a village should look like, and villages today maintain these standards. The houses line either side of a wide path dug into clay, and between the houses are wide swathes of grass, kept short like suburban lawns. The houses are built on pilings one or two meters above the ground, and the traditional internal division of houses into male and female sides has been replaced by one or more interior rooms. Coconut palms line the paths of the village.

The social composition of a modern Yonggom village has largely been shaped accidentally. Each village is composed of members of a number of clans, most of which also have members in several other villages. The lack of any form of political organization transcending the clan means that there is a political vacuum in the village, making cooperative ventures or community sanctions difficult to carry out. The absence of traditional authority is partially mitigated by the power of the clans which own the land on which a village is built, by officials elected as village councilors, and by new residential alliances between affines.

#### **Missions and Christianity**

Most Yonggom consider themselves Christian and belong to one of the three major churches in the region. To which church one belongs is largely the result of how the region was divided among the missionaries. West of the border, based in Ninati, the Dutch Roman Catholic Order of the Sacred Heart has been active since 1933 (Schoorl n.d.). East of the border, a French Canadian Roman Catholic order has been based in Kiunga since 1961 (Delbos 1985). Along the Ok Tedi River, based in Atkamba and Rumginae (on a tributary of the Ok Tedi), the Evangelical Church of Papua

Table 1: Yonggom Village Census, 1980

District	Village	Persons	M	F	Non-Citizens
Lake Murray	Nago	175	90	85	0
	Buseki	133	61	69	3
<b>District Sub-Total:</b>		308	151	154	3
Moian	Erekta	146	65	81	0
	Ulawas	123	58	65	0
	Karemgu	128	61	67	0
	Kawok	54	32	22	0
	Membok	166	85	81	0
	Moian	235	124	111	0
<b>District Sub-Total:</b>		852	425	427	0
South Ok Tedi	Atkamba/Aran	285	154	131	0
	Bongubun	44	17	27	0
	Dome	204	95	109	0
	Yeran	78	34	44	0
	Yogi	125	69	56	0
	Komokpin	123	59	64	0
<b>District Sub-Total:</b>		859	428	431	0
North Ok Tedi	Ambaga	194	101	93	0
	Kungembit	127	75	52	0
	Kungim	483	242	223	18
<b>Rural Sub-Total:</b>		2823	1422	1380	21
Kiunga**	(Yonggom)	588	321	267	--
<b>Total Yonggom (PNG):</b>		3411	1743	1647	21

\* Aran 1 & 2 are built beside the Mission Station at Atkamba

\*\* Urban data from King (1983).

Source: Papua New Guinea National Census (1980)

(or E.C.P.), formerly the Asia Pacific Christian Mission, has been engaged in missionary activity in the North Fly since the end of World War Two (Prince and Prince 1981). In addition, the villagers of Nago and Buseki on the north shore of Lake Murray, are Jehovah's Witnesses.

The domination of the three main churches is largely maintained through their control of services, including education and health care. In Papua New Guinea, government funds for these services are funneled through the churches, which in the process have become among the last bastions of colonial authority. However, their influence has weakened somewhat as small, independent churches in the Kiunga area have begun to recruit successfully from among the Yonggom.

The Catholic and Evangelical churches differ significantly in their policies. The Catholics do not interfere with local religious beliefs and practices. Little attempt is made by the expatriate clergy to encourage a synthesis of Catholicism and local religious traditions. The Yonggom are largely excluded from the decision-making processes of the Catholic Church.

In contrast, the Evangelical Church of Papua acknowledges and reinforces beliefs in magic and sorcery, by respecting their efficacy and condemning them as the work of the devil. Church members are encouraged to ignore traditional restrictions and obligations, destroy ritual objects, and publicly reveal secret cult practices. In

1984, the holi (holy spirit) revival movement spread from Tari (Frankel 1986) to the Ok Tedi, and church members began shaking, speaking in tongues, making public confessions, renouncing taboos, destroying magic talismans, and revealing cult sound-producing instruments. The holi movement revived a moribund church, but it did not lead to a restructuring of community life. Although the leadership of the Evangelical Church of Papua is local, expatriate advisors still wield considerable power.

#### **Economic Transformation**

In 1957, Schoorl (n.d.) predicted that cowrie shell valuables would gradually be replaced by foreign currency as soon as there was enough cash in circulation. By 1960, small amounts of Dutch or Australian currency were commonly included in marriage transactions, and by the end of the decade, shell valuables had been superceded as a medium of exchange. The transformation of the local economic scene did not proceed entirely smoothly. As has been common throughout Melanesia, the Yonggom became involved in cargo cult activity which reflected dissatisfaction with and their alienation from economic opportunity (see Chapter 11).

#### **Indonesia, Irian Jaya, and the Refugees**

In 1984, 10,000 refugees fled from the formerly Dutch and now Indonesian-controlled territory of Irian Jaya into

the formerly Australian and now independent Papua New Guinea. Among them were about 5,000 Yonggom, who settled into makeshift camps, most of them built alongside existing Yonggom and Ningerum villages. Elsewhere (Kirsch n.d.) I have described the refugee movement and the motivation behind it in greater detail.

When it became clear that the refugees planned to remain in Papua New Guinea, the government of Papua New Guinea established a resettlement center away from the border, in East Awin (between Kiunga and Nomad). In 1988 the border camps were officially closed and aid to them was cut off, but the majority of the refugees refused to relocate. Subsequently the refugees reorganized themselves into several larger camps.

The reorganization has placed great demands on the land's carrying capacity. Sago stands have been over-harvested and wild game reserves close to the camps have been depleted. Competition over resources is also causing hardship among the villagers.

The emotional atmosphere of "fear and mistrust" that Schoorl (n.d.) described for Yonggom society is amplified in the refugee camps by the uncertain circumstances, the crowding, and the competition over scarce resources. Local villagers are torn between the desire to support the refugees because of kinship ties and cultural affinity, anger at the refugees for depleting local resources, and

fear of the refugees' potential to cause illness and death through sorcery.

### **The Golden Fly**

In the late 1960's, copper and gold deposits were located on Mt. Fubilan in the Star Mountains (Jackson 1982). This discovery of valuable ores at the headwaters of the Ok Tedi River bore great economic promise, but the Yonggom have largely been disappointed by their lack of participation in the resulting development.

Moreover, the dumping of sediment, particulate copper, and other heavy metals in the Ok Tedi River have effectively destroyed the Ok Tedi ecosystem. Sediment from the mines has been deposited on the riverbanks, forming five and ten metre-wide stretches of knee-deep mud. Fish kills in the river have been high. Particulate copper has been deposited on sandbanks where turtles lay their eggs. The ecology of the small creeks and streams which lead into the Ok Tedi has been disrupted, threatening other riverine life, including crayfish and bivalves. The birds which depend upon aquatic life, such as egrets, riverine kingfishers, and brahminy kites, have left the Ok Tedi River. Biologists (e.g. Mowbray 1986) have warned that the long-term health effects of heavy metals in the ecosystem are still unknown.

The environmental damage caused by the mine has many practical consequences for the Yonggom who live along the

river. They can no longer drink from the river, nor can they swim, bathe, or wash clothes in it. They are unable to replace the protein in their diets that was formerly provided by aquatic resources. Fertile land along the riverbank has been inundated by sterile sediment from the mine. In addition, sand clogs navigation channels for travelling the Ok Tedi River by motorcanoe, which is the only route available for transporting produce to local markets, rubber to buyers, and food and medicine back to the villages.

These changes are more significant because of the presence of the refugees. Traditional subsistence techniques, swidden horticulture combined with sago harvesting, are suitable only in areas with relatively low population densities. Overuse of land and resources decrease the return from the labor invested. The impact of the mine and the presence of the refugees have combined to significantly decrease Yonggom food production.

#### **Illness and Health Care**

Life in the North Fly-Digul Plateau is precarious. The greatest threats to survival are microscopic. Anopheles mosquitoes are vectors for at least three and probably four strains of malaria (Taukruo and Nurse 1978-79), including chloroquine-resistant *Falciparum* and the primaquine-sensitive Chesson strain of *Vivax* (Harvey Rubin p.c.).

Malaria accounts for many deaths, most often among young children and the elderly, as well as for cases of permanent mental impairment. Filariasis, also transmitted by mosquito, causes painful and sometimes crippling disfigurement. Hookworm is endemic and results in anemia, exacerbating the general poor health. Leprosy and yaws have not been eradicated, but are under control. Dysentery and giardia are common, and infants in particular are at risk for diarrheal diseases. Respiratory ailments, especially pneumonia and tuberculosis, are common and often life-threatening. In addition to tuberculosis, other diseases present as a result of outside contact include polio, measles, and periodic and often-deadly epidemics of influenza. Infant mortality remains high. Village-based health care (cf: Welsch 1982, 1983) is efficient, but lacking in resources.

#### **Employment and the Economy Today .**

Associated with the construction phase of the Ok Tedi mine in the late 1970's and the early 1980's, was a significant urban migration. More than a quarter of the Yonggom living in Papua New Guinea, including the entire village of Ulawas, have moved to Kiunga (King 1983). In Kiunga, most of the Yonggom live in seven or eight crowded settlements along the road between the developed area of town and the airport. Settlements are organized according

to village affiliation. The houses are built largely of traditional material (although zinc roofing is becoming more common) and resemble village dwellings. There is no running water or electricity in the settlements.

Some Yonggom are employed in unskilled or semi-skilled capacity in construction and transportation, and others in the public sector, especially health care and education (King 1983). Only three Yonggom men are employed directly by Ok Tedi Mining, Ltd. (Marty Bos p.c.), although others work for firms sub-contracted by the mine. Urban households are typically centered around one wage-earner whose income supports extended family members residing with him. Urban households still depend on sago and gardens for much of their diet. Household budgets are supplemented by cash earned at the town market by selling garden produce, fish, and other foodstuffs.

Villagers have access to cash from rubber sales, from which it is possible to make about K100-K150 (about US \$120-\$180) per person annually; they are also helped by urban remittances, sale of rural produce at urban markets, and a common pattern of alternating between several years each of urban employment and village residence.

The North Fly region, in part because of a quarantine forbidding transport of food crops or animals from the border zone, has been the focus of few village-based development programs. At present, the only significant cash

crop is rubber. Only with the AIDS crisis and the increased global demand for high-quality latex has rubber production in the North Fly become economically viable. Owing to the lack of a growers' cooperative or a government agreement to purchase raw latex directly from villagers, a larger share of the profits accrues to an independent purchaser than to the villagers. As a result of the low return from labor, very few villagers exploit their rubber groves to their full economic potential.

### Chapter Three: Dome Village and Fieldwork

Dong was born near the Muyu River in what is now Irian Jaya. Her father was Damop from Ninibiran clan and her mother Botak from Yat, a clan which owns land along the border. After she grew up, her father asked her to marry Watan, and their first child was born on his land at Atkibi. After a killing at Dimin, Dong fled south with a group of people who were fearful of reprisal raids. The landowner complained about their use of the land, so the group moved to a place near the current village of Moian, and later moved again to the sago swamps at Derikaba, the confluence of the Fly and Ok Tedi Rivers. They stayed there for several years until Wanmut, whose father had been killed at Dimin, invited them to join him at Dimin, where the Australian government had instructed the Yonggom to form a settlement. About ten years later, they were told to build a village on the Ok Tedi River, and Dong settled in Dome.

-- story of how one woman came to Dome

#### Fieldwork in Dome Village

After a preliminary visit to Papua New Guinea from June to August 1986, I returned to conduct fieldwork from September 1987 to June 1989. Although I was based primarily in the village of Dome, I visited twelve of the sixteen Yonggom villages in Papua New Guinea, spending a night in many of them, and also visited five refugee camps. Much of my time away from Dome was spent in Kiunga, visiting Yonggom settlements there.

Dome village acquired its name from an Australian government officer on patrol in the 1960's. There are two competing versions of the story. In one account, a patrol officer pointed to the village and asked its name; the people thought he was pointing to a man paddling a canoe, so the village was named after the verb *dome*, meaning "to

paddle." In the other version, Dome acquired its name when the villagers thought the patrol officer was pointing to the tree they call *at dom*. The land on which the village is built lies between two named pieces of land, Wukaba to the south and Amotkaba to the north. Wukaba was the place where D'Albertis fired rockets over the heads of the curious Yonggom men in 1876; it is also opposite the island on which the Australian police camp was briefly established in 1922.

Members of eighteen different clans live in Dome. Most of these clans own land to the west of Dome, in the area close to the border. The land on which the village stands is owned by members of Od clan. According to a census taken by Konge Kolokoló, a village health worker, there were 180 people living in Dome in June 1988, although this number fluctuates during the year (see Table 2).

The adjacent refugee camp (known as Dome Refugee Camp) was established in 1982, and its population increased significantly after the re-organization of the border camps in 1989. In the census taken in June 1988, there were 227 people refugees in the camp; a year later the population had increased to nearly 500. Yogi village, twenty-five minutes to the north by foot, had 123 residents in June 1988, and the adjacent refugee camp (Yogi Refugee Camp) had a population of 360.

Table 2: Village and Refugee Camp Census, 1988

Catg/Place	Dome	Yogi	Dome R/C	Yogi R/C
Date (1988)	6/15	6/21	6/28	6/22
Persons	180	123	227	360
Men	42	24	49	60
Women	39	30	54	68
Children	99	69	124	232
Child/Adult Ratio	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.8****
Occupied Houses	35	20	---	---
Buildings	43**	39**	44	59
Persons per House	5.1	6.2	5.0***	6.1***
Pigs	29*	56	---	---
Dogs	33*	33	---	---
Cats	7*	2	---	---
Chickens	50*	86	---	---
Cassowary	1*	0	---	---

-- not counted

\* recorded 3/25/1988

\*\* includes new houses under construction

\*\*\* figures low due to unoccupied buildings included in total

\*\*\*\* number of children may include those from other refugee camps attending school in Iogi camp.

Dome cannot be considered an isolated social unit. There is a regular flow of people to and from the village. Dome is a hub in a number of overlapping kin networks that link other villages and urban settlements in both Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya. Every clan has both male and female members living elsewhere. Marriages are commonly arranged according to the regional rather than the village context. As a result, it would not be very informative to conduct statistical analyses on demographic data collected from one or two villages.

The primary school in Dome has been open for a decade and is also attended by children from Yogi village. There are two classes each year. A few students pass their primary school exams and continue on to high school in Kiunga.

The population of Dome is divided between the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church of Papua. For the most part, the division corresponds with clan membership as well as the layout of the village. As a whole, the Catholic villagers tend to be more community-oriented, more interested in education, and more involved in traditional matters. Also, Catholic men are involved in the services of the Church, while the participants in services held by the Evangelical Church of Papua are almost exclusively women and children. There is tension between the members of the two churches both in terms of community involvement and in

connection to conflicting ideas about various beliefs and practices.

As most of the land surrounding the village is owned by Od clan, there is also tension regarding continued access to gardens and hunting land, which was granted by the land owners when the village was established. The land owners, who are members of the Evangelical Church of Papua, occasionally threaten to withdraw their permission to use the land, and landless villagers sometimes respond with threats to cut down the trees they have planted and to abandon the village for their own land along the border.

#### **Research Methods and the Incorporation of Diversity**

One of the significant facts about Dome village is that it is composed of members of a number of clans from a wide area who speak several different language varieties and exhibit significant cultural difference. One aim of this text is to describe and analyze cultural diversity among the Yonggom. More than simply acknowledging diversity a la Dorsey, whose footnote, "Two Crows denies this," was made famous by Sapir (1949), this required paying systematic attention to differing points of view while in the field. Rather than seeking the best answer to a question, I looked for a range of answers. For example, I was not only interested in recording the complete text of a myth, but I was also concerned with the fragmentary knowledge that

others had of it. An important source of data for this text is thus information that I collected on the distribution of knowledge, opinions, and ideas.

Furthermore, in Dome I met no one like Turner's Muchona (Casagrande 1960), upon whom I could depend for privileged insight into Yonggom culture. Among the Yonggom there are no persons who have (or claim to have) special access to cosmological secrets, such as, for example, the Kaluli spirit mediums upon whom Schieffelin (1976) has relied in order to depict the Kaluli view of the "unseen world." While there are people among the Yonggom who are recognized as being more knowledgeable about such matters as dream interpretations or myth, my data was richest when drawn from a number of sources.

Two of the important dynamics of Yonggom culture are ambiguity and the lack of public consensus. I present a number of examples of this in the text that follows, including the role of indeterminacy in limiting violent responses to sorcery, the lack of knowledge about certain kinds of magic, and the inconsistencies of food taboos applied to young men attending the yawat cult for the first time. I also examine the Yonggom ethos of trickery and deceit and the role that this and other assumptions about human character play in the construction of explanations of illness and of death in terms of sorcery.

In keeping with these theoretical concerns, I have made an effort to incorporate different Yonggom "voices" into the text, particularly where I found they were in conflict or disagreement. I have also identified the speaker if his or her words appear frequently within the text. I use the convention of indentation to separate lengthy descriptions of events from subsequent analysis. These descriptions are based on my field notes.

#### **The Anthropologist from the Yonggom Point of View**

In the last decade, anthropologists have begun to pay increased attention to their own place in the production of ethnography, as the nature of the encounter necessarily shapes the results obtained (e.g. Dwyer 1982, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986, and Clifford 1988).

Through an introduction by another anthropologist, I was adopted into the Woia family and their clan. Based on this relationship, I was incorporated into a number of kinship networks and many people referred to me by kin terms such as *arom* (the reciprocal term for mother's brother and sister's son), *ambang* (elder brother or elder parallel cousin), or *wononggim* (in-law). Several young men and I shared reciprocal nicknames (see chapter 6) like *ne yigoro*, "my forest dragon," or *ne kevetman*, "my bachelor." Very few people called me by my given name.

Other people, despite our fictional kin ties, always referred to me as *duan*, which, although the same word as the Malay *tuan* or "sir," is now used colloquially as a general term for Europeans, and not necessarily a term of respect or deference. Other people would greet me warmly with the phrase *ne karup*, which literally means "my man" or *ne duan*, "my European." Eventually I acquired the nickname "custom *duan*" and people became quite adept at explaining to strangers why I was living in the village, learning their language, or visiting a pig feast.

After a few months, I was able to overcome initial concerns among the refugees that I was a spy (*indop indop*). Much more difficult to overcome was the notion that I was associated with an important mythological figure and therefore connected to their hopes for independence from Indonesia. Towards the end of my stay in Dome, I was surprised to find out that some of the villagers with whom I regularly spoke and often shared food, still had questions about my presence in the village: Was I an ancestor? A spirit? Or just a man? I consider these issues in Chapter 11.

I was never able to live up to their image of how the ideal white man should live: that he should eat anything, sleep anywhere, and not care what he smelled like. I did, however, eat sago and many other local foods, sleep where I

had to when necessary, and was eventually able to impress strangers with my grasp of their language (see Chapter 9).

### **My Place in Their Lives**

In two recent ethnographies by Allen (1988) and Abu-Lughod (1986), written about very different communities in the Andean Highlands of Peru and the Western Desert of Egypt, the anthropologists present similar vignettes in which they participate in mourning the death of someone in the communities in which they studied. The honesty of their accounts is compelling and effectively demonstrates their rapport with the people about whom they are writing. Both vignettes are presented at the beginning of the ethnographies and as literary devices, they are examples of what Clifford (1983) has referred to as demonstrations of "ethnographic authority." An unstated premise in each account is the universality of grief and how such emotions produce strong feelings of solidarity.

My experience with the death of a close friend in the field was no less emotionally powerful, but was nonetheless quite different. When I began fieldwork in 1987, Dako Watan moved from the town of Kiunga to Dome village in order to help me in my work and to keep a watchful eye on me. A rare bachelor in his late thirties, Dako was less occupied with family matters than others his age, and we spent

considerable time together. Gradually we became close friends.

Years before I met him, Dako had been diagnosed with tuberculosis and had never fully recovered. Rather suddenly one evening, Dako became violently ill and began vomiting blood. The next morning, I helped carry him to the house beside the village health center. Using the shortwave radio, I tried in vain to convince the expatriate doctor in Runginae to send a motorcanoe to bring Dako to the hospital. While a number of us waited anxiously outside, Dako passed away.

Never before had I felt so out of place in the village. People began to keen and a crowd gathered, some of them venturing inside the house where Dako's body lay. I was crying, too, but I stood off to one side, leaning against a nearby building. Even before Eweyok came for his brother's body, I retreated into my house. It was not a sense of solidarity that I felt, but isolation and distance. Who was I to mourn for Dako? I had known him for only a handful of months. And who was I, an outsider with privileged access to medical care that might have saved his life, to sit among the mourners? I stayed in my house for most of the following day. When Dako's brother eventually sent for me, it was with a message to take a photograph of Dako, who had been dressed for burial in a shirt that I had given him. The following day I helped to cover Dako's grave with dirt.

### **Economic Relations**

Not long after my arrival in Dome, I was told that the Yonggom do not like to sell food, except for pig meat. The villagers would bring me food and I could give them gifts in return. When there was food in the village, I would always have my share. When people were hungry; I would be hungry, too. With few exceptions, this proved to be a good way to organize otherwise clumsy transactions.

It took me months to learn that when people asked me for small amounts of money or goods, it was often an attempt to build a relationship with me. For them to overwhelm me with gifts would be presumptuous and even somewhat rude. Learning how to negotiate payment for a pig or for labor was also difficult. An agreement on a price or an amount of money is merely an accord to proceed with the transaction. Either side can later complain that the price was too high or too low and demand an adjustment.

I preferred to give gifts, usually food and tobacco, in return for assistance, with the following exceptions:

(1) when people were taken away from their own labor to help me, (2) when people did physical labor for me, e.g. in building a canoe, and (3) when I was making collections for the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery and the University Museum of Philadelphia. When a pig was slaughtered in the village and sold in pieces to raise cash, I usually bought about K50 (US \$60) worth of meat and

distributed it in bundles to people who had helped me with my work. During my last six months in the village, I began paying an assistant who had been contemplating seeking employment in town. I also sponsored a number of dances, call-and-response song ceremonies, and other rituals by supplying food, tobacco, and the money to purchase pigs; by paying for the labor involved in processing sago; and by compensating organizers for their time spent arranging the events.

### Language

In any given situation in the field, as many as five languages could have been in use: Yonggom, English, Police Motu, Pidgin English (Neo-Melanesian), and Malay (Bahasa Indonesia). Such panglossia reflects the region's diverse colonial history. In addition, between the villagers and the refugees, I had regular contact with native speakers of three of the four dialects of Yonggom.

My ability to communicate in each of these languages and dialects varied. I was able to converse in English with many young men and women, although often they preferred to speak in Yonggom. Only a few adults in Dome spoke Pidgin English, but I was able to have productive conversations with those who did. Most adults over thirty speak Police Motu, which was until recently the language of administration, and is still the language used by the

Catholic Church in the Province. My understanding of Motu was largely passive and my knowledge of Malay, spoken by the refugees, was even more rudimentary.

Like other Non-Austronesian languages, Yonggom is difficult for a native English-speaker to learn. I was never consistently comfortable with my spoken command of the language. Even though I conducted many discussions in Yonggom, speakers of Pidgin or English were usually available for consultation if there was an impasse in the conversation. Over time, my assistants acquired expertise in resolving such difficulties without recourse to a second language.

#### **A Note on Transcription**

I have chosen to transcribe Yonggom phonetically. A phonemic transcription for Yonggom has limited usefulness because of the great differences in dialects between communities. A published translation of the New Testament (Bible Society of Papua New Guinea 1987) that used phonemic representation was very difficult for the Yonggom to read. My two guidelines in transcription are simplicity and the standards used by literate Yonggom in writing letters in their own language. I refer those interested in the technical aspects of Yonggom phonology to Bartell (n.d.).

One problem is how to transcribe such processes as vowel reduction and assimilation (e.g. *ne ambip*, my house,

when spoken is *nambip*). I retain vowel reduction when transcribing spoken texts and make a note of it where the terms are significant. The process occurs within nouns and verbs as well, e.g. the name *Karupipban* is usually pronounced *Karupin* and the verb "*ne mananin*" which means "I am coming" may be pronounced "*ne manin*." Long vowels are transcribed as doubled, i.e. "*aa*," "*ee*," "*ii*," "*oo*," and "*uu*." Although there are probably some tonal distinctions in Yonggom (cf: Healey 1964), I have not recorded them.

In the text, I indicate Yonggom words with italics. Yonggom nouns have no plural forms and I have not added the English "s" to plurals. Yonggom names for persons, places, and clans are written in the standard typeface. Words in languages other than English or Yonggom, including Motu, Malay, Pidgin English (Neo-Melanesian), and other Romance languages, are underlined. My authority for Pidgin English is Mihalic (1971) and for Hiri Motu, Dutton and Voorhoeve (1971).

## **Chapter Four: Sorcery**

We Yonggom are not like white people who are all friends; we have sorcery and we kill each other. You whites don't have sorcery, so you have many people and are strong and powerful.

-- a frequent Yonggom comment

### **Introduction**

Among the Yonggom, most deaths and serious illnesses are attributed to sorcery rather than accidents and natural causes. Unlike many other aspects of Yonggom culture, accounts of sorcery display a marked degree of homogeneity. In this chapter, I consider the techniques that the Yonggom say are used to cause illness and death, and the strategies that the Yonggom employ in order to attribute responsibility for acts of sorcery. Although divination procedures are held in order to identify persons responsible for sorcery, no consensus is reached regarding their results. Such procedures do not identify the sorcerer, but produce a contested list of suspects and plausible scenarios. In contrast to the consistency of descriptions of acts of sorcery, efforts to identify a sorcerer are indeterminate. I consider the implications of this contrast at the conclusion of this chapter.

### Sorcery among the Yonggom

The Yonggom refer to two general types of sorcery. Assault sorcery (*kumka* and *kuman*) is described as a physical attack on the victim, generally resulting in his or her death. In Melanesian Pidgin, assault sorcery is referred to as sanguma. Packet sorcery (*bom* and *mirim*) is described as the manipulation of a substance or associated with the victim, causing him to fall ill. In Melanesian Pidgin, packet sorcery is referred to as posin. Both assault sorcery and packet sorcery are attributed to deliberate, conscious acts. Other minor illnesses are considered to be the unintended consequences of the use of magic spells or are attributed to objects implanted in the body of the victim.

When illness is attributed to packet sorcery, the Yonggom discuss the identity of the sorcerer informally and during formal sorcery inquests (*kibirat*). The aim of these discussions is to apply social pressure on the sorcerer to stop the sorcery and bring an end to the illness. In the case of assault sorcery, divination (*awon monbe*) stimulates similar discussions about persons suspected of sorcery and is intended to discourage future acts of sorcery. If a death occurs, relatives of the deceased may also use retribution sorcery which acts directly against the sorcerer. During regional meetings about sorcery, speakers attribute deaths to retribution sorcery (*bop mirim*). The

connections between the sorcerer and his or her victims are established by constructing scenarios which account for the motives of the sorcerer.

**Assault Sorcery: *Kuman* and *Kumka***

One of the greatest threats to the life of a Yonggom is an attack by a *kuman*. A *kuman* may be a man or a woman. The *kuman* lies in wait for the intended victim and may attack during the day or at night. The victim is usually alone or accompanied only by young children. Most attacks are said to occur when women are working in their gardens and men are hunting in the rain forest, or when someone strays from the protective company of others.

A *kuman* is described as striking his or her victim with a heavy blunt object such as a stone club, a tree branch, or a large rock. The injuries inflicted by a *kuman* are always fatal. Even if the victim of a *kuman* assault has the strength to return home after the attack, he or she will collapse shortly afterward. More often the victim is unable to move from the site of the attack.

The wounds inflicted by a *kuman* are not visible while the victim is still alive. It is only after death, during a close examination of the corpse, that the outline of the weapon used in the attack is revealed. It is said that the *kuman* will not strike with a sharp object, such as an axe or a knife, which would puncture the skin, leaving visible

marks. The victim of a *kuman* assault suffers from temporary amnesia and is usually unable to identify the *kuman* or even remember the assault, although there are techniques to help him or her remember.<sup>1</sup>

There is no cure or remedy for the attack of a *kuman*; the victim is rapidly overcome and will die within a short period of time. When someone is convinced that he or she is the victim of a *kuman* assault, he or she may refuse Western medical treatment and give up drinking and eating:

One morning, Munop, a married woman in her forties, was cooking sago in her house, when she stood up to ask her son whether he wanted to eat. Suddenly she lost consciousness and fell to the floor. Within moments her breathing had stopped and she was dead.

Although Munop had recently been hospitalized in Kiunga, it was said that a *kuman* killed her. The day before she mentioned that she had fallen down once while working in her garden, and a second time while chopping firewood. Apart from her young son, she had been alone when she fell.

When her husband Dabuna returned from hunting on the night of her death, the story was pieced together. Her falls the day before were the result of an attack by a *kuman*. Her body was examined and her backbone and arm showed signs that they had been broken by the *kuman*.

Almost as deadly as a *kuman* is the *kumka*. Like a *kuman*, the *kumka* usually strikes his victim with a heavy, blunt object. The *kumka* may also use a bow and arrows, shooting an arrow through the floorboards of the house while the intended victim is asleep. A few days may pass before

---

<sup>1</sup>One such technique is to place bandicoot (*bawaan*) jawbones in the mouth of the victim, who may then be able to identify his or her attacker.

the victim becomes aware of the physical symptoms of the attack and he or she may languish several weeks before dying. The attack of a *kumka* is usually fatal; if the victim recovers, the illness may be attributed to a different cause.

There is little difference between the assault of the *kuman* and that of the *kumka*. In fact, when talking about a particular case, some people would say that it was people say that it was *kumka* and others that it was *kuman*. The distinguishing feature is that an assault by a *kumka* causes the victim to die more quickly than a comparable assault by a *kuman*. As a result, while the victim of an assault is still alive, the assault will usually be attributed to a *kuman*, while after his death, the assault will more likely be attributed to a *kumka*.

Amerap, an orphan, is about twelve years old. He told me that one day his mother went to her garden alone, leaving his younger brother in the house. The small boy told his mother that he wanted to go with her, but she said that she wanted to go quickly and would be back soon. He waited a long time and finally his mother returned. "You were gone a long time," the boy said to his mother, "what were you doing?" The mother told him, "I was cleaning around the banana plants." She cooked sago and fish and served it to her sons. They were puzzled, because she had not gone fishing. After they ate, their mother collapsed. The *kumka* had given her fish when she was in her garden and then killed her.

Amerap's elder brother also was killed by a *kumka*. One evening he wanted to urinate, so he asked his youngest brother to go with him. The brother refused, telling him to go alone. He went down the path and walked past an old man and woman coming from their garden. He climbed on a log and stood there, urinating into the sago swamp. A *kumka* knocked him down and held him

underwater. The brother swallowed a lot of water. Finally the *kumka* released the brother and he came back to the house and died.

Any adult may be a *kumka* or a *kuman*. The perpetrator of these attacks is said to be an ordinary individual with no special powers or abilities. The phrase *karup kumka*, literally "man *kumka*," is generally used to refer to a *kumka*. The verb "aye," to strike or kill, is also used for the assault of a *kumka* or *kuman*.

The Yonggom describe two differences between the attack of a *kumka* or *kuman* and a direct physical assault. The first is the temporary amnesia caused by a *kumka* or *kuman* assault; the victim is generally unable to identify the assailant or even recall the attack. This lapse in memory in an essential component of the plausibility of assault sorcery. The second difference assault sorcery and direct physical attacks is the absence of any visible evidence that an assault has taken place. Despite being struck by weapons, no physical marks appear on the body until after death.

Even though *kumka* and *kuman* are said to be ordinary men and women, the terms used to describe their actions suggest that they have deliberately changed in some manner or form. The expression used to describe an attack is *inamen amonom be kumka*, which means to "intentionally become a *kumka*."

**Packet Sorcery: Bom and Mirim**

The techniques for *bom* and *mirim* packet sorcery are considered to cause serious illness, rather than, as with *kumka* and *kuman*, relatively sudden deaths. Both *bom* and *mirim* involve the use of discarded crumbs of food, bits of tobacco from a cigarette or pipe, or body exuviae or effluvia such as hair, nails, feces, or urine. As the techniques involved in making *bom* and *mirim* are public knowledge, anyone who has access to any of these substances is potentially able to use *bom* or *mirim* to cause illness.

The effects of *bom* become apparent relatively quickly and are severe and debilitating. *Bom* often results in the loss of appetite and a feeling of lethargy. A victim of *bom* tends to spend his or her days lying quietly beside the hearth. He or she may lose the mobility of an arm or leg. A victim of *bom* may vomit when trying to eat or be unable to defecate or urinate. Eventually he or she may cease conversing and show little interest in continuing to live. The effects of *bom* are progressive and the victim's health deteriorates rapidly.

In contrast to *bom*, the effects of *mirim* develop over a longer period of time. Typically the victim of *mirim* loses weight slowly. He or she becomes tired more easily and more often. The victim may have bouts of diarrhea, repeated headaches, and pains in his or her joints and limbs. These symptoms may come and go over an extended period of time.

Gradually the victim of *mirim* becomes increasingly weak and lethargic. *Mirim* is characterized by a chronic illness and it can eventually cause death.

Despite the fact that *bom* has a rapid onset and is quickly debilitating, and *mirim* progresses more slowly, it may be difficult to determine whether a patient is suffering from *bom* or *mirim*. As a result, many illnesses are referred to as being caused by *bom-mirim*.

In making either *bom* or *mirim*, the first step is to gather body exuviae or effluvia, or materials with which the intended victim has been in contact. This may be difficult, since such materials are carefully protected. Food scraps are burned at the end of every meal, as are husks, rinds, and peels from fruits and vegetables. Nail clippings and hair parings are also collected and destroyed. Bits of tobacco are kept rather than carelessly discarded.

The person making *bom* or *mirim* should avoid touching these materials directly; ideally they should be handled with tongs or a stick. Once the substance has been collected, it may be wrapped in a leaf to form a packet. Either the packet or the substance itself can be manipulated in a number of ways in order to cause illness.

The type of *mirim* known as *yinberek mirim* uses a crocodile (*yinberek*) bone or skull. The bone is broken and the substance is placed inside. Or the mandible is separated from the cranium and the substance placed between

the jaws of the crocodile. The bone or skull is bound together with sweatbee wax and cane and put on the shelf above the hearth where a fire is kept burning. Soon the person from whom the substance was obtained will become ill. The victim's joints will tighten up and the victim will no longer be able to turn his or her head. The victim will stop eating and die. Much as the bone or skull is bound together with wax and cane, the victim's joints will become immobilized.

*Wewak mirim* involves placing the requisite materials in the hole of a carpenter bee (*wewak*). As the insect bores through the wood, it will drag the sorcery substance through its hole, causing the intended victim to have powerful headaches. When the bee completes its tunnel and emerges from the other side of the wood, the victim will die.

*At eep mirim* uses the coarse leaves of the *at eep* plant, which causes the victim to scratch until his or her skin is bloody. In *motok dem mirim*, the substance or packet is placed in the hole of a crab (*motok*), which is then sealed. When the crab disturbs the packet, the victim will become ill.

Kati, a middle-aged refugee from Kawangtet living in Dome Refugee Camp, was renowned for the number of wild pigs that he caught in his deadfall traps. Shortly after Kati became ill, Tanus, another refugee from Kawangtet, left the camp and returned to Irian Jaya with his family. Kati's family blamed Tanus for the Kati's illness, claiming that he was resentful of Kati's success in catching pigs.

Tanus was said to have fed a piece of skin from a pig trapped by Kati to a *yigoro* lizard (forest dragon) in order to make to make *yigoro mirim*. As a result, Kati became ill and was unable to leave his house to hunt or set traps. As his condition grew worse, he stopped talking and eventually refused to eat or drink. Soon afterwards he died.

While *kumka* and *kuman* are said to directly assault their intended victim, *bom* and *mirim* affect the victim indirectly in the way of classic "imitative magic." In the case of *yinbep mirim*, for example, if a shred of tobacco from a man's cigarette is placed between the jaws of a crocodile skull, then the man will contract symptoms analogous to the sorcerer's treatment of the crocodile skull and tobacco. While recovery from the assault of a *kumka* or *kuman* is rare, illness caused by *bom* and *mirim* can be treated by retrieving the object associated with the victim from the process causing the illness. In the example above, this would be accomplished by removing the tobacco from the jaw of the crocodile.

#### **Unintended Ill Effects: Waruk**

Both assault sorcery (*kumka* and *kuman*) and packet sorcery (*bom* and *mirim*) result from intentional actions. Another form of illness is also the result of human activity, but is not deliberately caused. This type of illness is an unintended side-effect of the use of particular *waruk* spells or incantations.

There are many types of *waruk*, including spells for hunting, or travelling quickly through the tangled underbrush of the rain forest, or constructing the steps to a house. Many *waruk* are centered around the secret *waruk* name of an animal or object, such as the *waruk* name of the animal one hopes to shoot, the *waruk* of the forest floor, or the *waruk* of the steps. These names are for the most part secret and privately owned. An object or animal may have many such *waruk* names, each protected by its owner or owners. Other *waruk* are effective without the use of a *waruk* name.

The danger from *waruk* is potentially two-sided, as they can cause their owner, or someone with whom he has come into contact, to become sick with illnesses that are generally minor. In order to treat the illness, the *waruk* must be "called" away from the patient. If an uninvolved third party is not able to accomplish this, the owner must come and personally "redirect" the *waruk*.

*Dinggan waruk*, used in hunting large game, are "sent out" to find animals. One explanation how *dinggan waruk* work is that they attack the stomachs of the animals that one hopes to shoot. It "eats" their stomach, causing the animals to cry out in pain. When the hunter hears the animals, he knows where to shoot. Sometimes *dinggan waruk* can inadvertently cause people to suffer from similar stomach pains.

Kamawud, an unmarried young man about twenty, could not sleep one night; he said his stomach felt like it was "boiling." He woke up his mother and she tried to "redirect" the *waruk* that was affecting him by reciting a spell. Later the same night Kamawud was still not feeling well, so his father decided that it might be his own *waruk* that was affecting Kamawud. He took a cup of water and said the following words:

<i>Kamawud ne waruk ayine</i>	Kamawud my <i>waruk</i> hit him
<i>Kurim monowon diap</i>	Pigeon, bush fowl, cassowary
<i>awon ok yi kawa yi</i>	Pig, crocodile, iguana
<i>ot ana damonewa</i>	his intestines are being eaten
<i>Kamawud ye otamungga anip kowe</i>	Kamawud's intestines are being eaten so
<i>bopman damen kowe</i>	he is dying, so: (at this point he throws part of a cup of water onto Kamawud's stomach)
<i>ok yaran doan gere</i>	water is thrown; it is finished.

Then he gave Kamawud the rest of the cup of water to drink. Later that night Kamawud's stomach was still upset, so his mother brought several other people over to their house to "redirect" their *waruk*. The next morning he was fine.

In treating an illness cause by *waruk*, it may be necessary to ascertain whose *waruk* is involved. This can be accomplished by performing the *ambo kibin* or "pulling hair" divination.<sup>2</sup> A stick is held next to the patient's scalp and several strands of hair are rolled onto the stick. A list of names, usually of the people with whom the patient

---

<sup>2</sup>See Welsch (1982:340) for the description of a similar divination technique used by the Ningerum to identify ghosts considered to cause illness.

came in close contact during the day, is recited. After each name is called, the stick is pulled sharply. If the hair makes a loud snap, then the *waruk* that was causing the illness may belong to the person whose name was called. After several names have been called, some of the patient's hair is burned and given to the patient to smell. The persons whose names elicited positive responses may then be invited to the house to recite the formula (see above) that wards away the *waruk*. The owner of the *waruk* is not held responsible for the illness provided he is willing to come and "redirect" the *waruk* away from the patient.

#### **Other Causes of Illness**

Other ailments may be caused by the violation of taboos (*amop* or *kubup*) or the escape of a person's soul (*kinggen*). A more common explanation of illness is that foreign objects, such as a pebbles, bone fragments, or teeth, have been implanted in the person's body. The presence of such objects may be indicated by localized symptoms such as a pulled muscle, chest pains, heartburn, a backache, or stiffness of an arm or leg. While little is known about how the foreign objects are implanted into someone's body, the technique for removing such objects is commonly practiced.

Only some older men and women know the technique. First the injured or sore part of the body is rubbed with earth (*ogat*), bark (*at kat*), or ginger (*kamak*). Next, the

practitioner uses white clay, a sliver of bamboo, or a razor blade to mark the location of the injury. Using a packet of leaves, the practitioner rubs the area for several minutes. Once the packet has been removed, it is closely examined for the presence of any foreign objects.

The technique for removing objects implanted in the body is referred to as *ogat*, *at kat*, or *kamak*, depending on the substance rubbed onto the area of the injury, though it makes no difference which substance is used.<sup>3</sup> The objects that are found often suggest an additional route of therapy, as it is advisable that the patient avoid contact with related objects in the immediate future. The objects may also help the practitioner or the patient's family to identify tentatively the responsible party:

David, an unmarried young man about twenty, complained of a pain on his spine that he described as a "spider walking up and down" his backbone. David asked Uru to come to his house and treat his back. When Uru arrived, he had David rub some ginger (*kamak*) over his chest and back. Meanwhile, another young man was told to rub together a handful of lemon grass. David leaned against the center housepost and Uru called out the *waruk* name of houseposts.<sup>4</sup> Uru took the bundle of lemon grass and began rubbing it onto David's back. When he finished, he put the lemon grass on the floor and stepped away.

David's father opened the bundle and flattened it out. Inside was a pig's tooth. Uru told David that his back

---

<sup>3</sup>See Welsch (1982:333) for description of similar treatment among the Ningerum.

<sup>4</sup>The backbone (*anggorom kono*) and the housepost (*dot kono*) are considered homologous. *Kono* is bone, *anggorom* is back side, and *dot* is post.

would return to normal, but he should not to eat black pig for several months.

But the technique does not always reveal objects:

Charles, a man in his late twenties, operates a dinghy for the government. He injured his knee and it swelled up, so he asked Marius to treat it. Marius massaged the injured area, then took a razor blade and lightly cut an "x" into the knee. While chewing ginger root, he put his mouth over the wound and sucked in a number of times. He spat out a mouthful of saliva and began massaging the wound with a papaya leaf. When he opened the leaf, there was nothing inside. As there was no evidence that the injury had been caused by sorcery, Charles was reassured that his knee would heal quickly.

Although it is not known how objects are implanted into someone's body, it was suggested that they are put into a body the way pieces of food or a fingernail are inserted into a *bom* or *mirim* sorcery packet. The tip of an arrow shot by a *kumka* may also be retrieved from the victim's body using the same technique. It is understood that the process by which objects are implanted in the body is both intentional and malevolent.

Once the foreign objects have been located and removed from the body, it is expected that the associated ailment will abate. If the patient does not recover, it may be that all the objects were not removed, or that a *waruk* is affecting the patient, or that the patient is suffering from *bom-mirim*.

### Sorcery Inquests (*Kibirat*)

Since the symptoms of *bom* and *mirim* packet sorcery are analogous to the way in which a substance is manipulated, relief of these symptoms is achieved by separating the substance from the manipulative process. And since only the sorcerer has access to the substance or packet, successful therapy or treatment of the illness depends upon influencing the sorcerer.

Although the techniques for *bom* and *mirim* are public knowledge, acts of sorcery are not openly carried out. Accusations of sorcery are vigorously denied. In contrast to many other Melanesian societies in which sorcery is practiced, there are no known practitioners of sorcery among the Yonggom. Although the threat of sorcery is an important political resource in other Melanesian societies, such threats are unknown among the Yonggom.<sup>5</sup> The only testimony of personal complicity in sorcery is alleged deathbed confessions about practicing *bom-mirim* or being a *kumka* or *kuman*.

The first step in the treatment of *bop-mirim* is for agnates and affines of the patient to meet and discuss who may have been responsible for the sorcery. Even though sorcery accusations may be levied at particular individuals, the aim of these meetings is to gather information about a

---

<sup>5</sup>Here I am speaking of personalized threats; it is quite common to criticize others by suggesting that their behavior makes them vulnerable to sorcery.

range of persons who may have been responsible for the sorcery. It is hoped that the attention and accompanying social pressure will encourage the sorcerer to voluntarily stop the process causing the illness.

The discussion in these meetings focuses on events, relationships and unfulfilled obligations involving the patient and his close relatives. These scenarios are discussed in detail, for they are assumed to provide potential sources of motivation for sorcery:

Kurim's wife Mundap was very sick. Approximately twenty people, her agnates and affines, were invited to Kurim's house one morning to discuss the illness. During the discussion that ensued, several possible scenarios accounting for the act of sorcery were presented, including:

(1) Norokni said that Kurim and Mundap purchased an entire pig at the arat pig feast in Kawok village the previous December. She said that Kurim and Mundap did not distribute the meat properly and that someone may have become resentful and made *mirim* against Mundap as a result.

(2) Uruku and his wife used to live with Mundap and Kurim. At one point Uruku's wife had an affair and planned to leave her husband for the other man. Kurim spoke out strongly against her in public. It was suggested that perhaps Uruku's wife's mother Dabung made *mirim* against Mundap because Kurim spoke out strongly against her daughter.

The debate over the identity of the sorcerer continues outside the context of these family meetings as well. If there is no change in the patient's condition over time, or if the illness worsens, the family may decide to conduct a ritualized version of these informal discussions, known as

*kibirat*. All the adult members of the community are expected to attend.

*Kibirat* is held in a house after dark. Once the people have assembled outside the house, lengths of bamboo are exploded in a fire under the house and a yerot leaf is burned to scare away any malevolent *kinggen* (souls) or *awat* (spirits). After entering the house, the women sit by themselves in a group in a corner of the house, while the men sit in two separate groups on either side of the house. The two groups of men are known as (1) *ye karup* or "his people," and (2) *ye bonman*, people from other clans, a term also applied to opponents in fighting or raiding. The patient may be present, but does not participate.

Once everyone has been seated, an attempt is made to "redirect" any *waruk* which may be affecting the patient. This procedure is focused not on the owners of the *waruk*, as in *ambo kibin* hair-pulling divinations, but on *waruk* considered to be particularly dangerous, such as the *waruk* of the eel, tree kangaroo, or crocodile.

The *kibirat* begins with a long speech by the *anigat yariman*, literally the "owner of the illness," who is a close male relative of the patient. *Kibirat* means "to run," and the *anigat yariman* alternates between running in place, pacing, and speaking. He carries a black palm bow and several arrows in one hand and as he runs in place, he plucks the string of the bow. Tied loosely to the horn of

the bow is a cassowary claw, which vibrates noisily. He punctuates his oration with guttural shouts known as *kabuk*.

In his speech, the *anigat yariman* describes the patient's illness in detail, including its onset and the treatment which has been attempted. He also discusses his own reputation in the community, defending his behavior while also acknowledging mistakes that he has made in the past. He discusses the patient in the same manner.

The *anigat yariman* also describes several alternative scenarios accounting for the sorcery. Although he does not "know" (*geron*) who is responsible for the sorcery, he "speculates" (*meene*, also think) about the possibilities. For each scenario he describes, he may formulate specific accusations that are presented to "see whether they are true or false." In other words, the scenarios presented by the *anigat yariman* are treated like propositions to be verified or falsified.

Kendemo was very ill. She had been hospitalized in Kiunga, but the treatment was unsuccessful and she had been released. The chronic and severe nature of the illness and the unsuccessful Western medical treatment suggested to her husband Nonggok that the illness was the result of *mirim*. Nonggok called the people of Dome village to attend a *kibirat*.

In his opening speech as *anigat yariman*, Nonggok began by defending his own actions:

Why did someone make *mirim* against my wife? I don't ask for food or anything else. I don't ask for meat, I hunt for myself. Whenever I share food with others, I don't say hard words (*gurung weng*). I don't steal. You people are doing me wrong by making my wife sick.

Whenever I kill a wild pig or a cassowary, I bring it back to the village for people to eat. Why are you making my wife sick?

If you see that I have made mistakes, then you can speak and I will answer.

I have no debts in this village. If I had debts, then I would understand why you are making my wife sick, but I have no debts.

During his speech, Nonggok began to develop several scenarios accounting for the sorcery.

(1) He said that he only hunts on his own land and does not go to Kueman clan land to look for game. Here he referred to the members of Kueman clan, suggesting that they might be responsible for his wife's illness.

(2) He told a story about how his dog killed a pig and the owner of the pig demanded fifty Kina in compensation. Nonggok paid the money, but later told the man to give him back twenty Kina because he had paid too much. Here he suggested that the owner of the pig might still be angry with him.

(3) He talked about his *oni* (classificatory sister) and how she does not heed advice, but does whatever she wants. Here he suggested that someone may have made his wife sick because of something that his sister had done.

After the *anigat yariman* finishes speaking, he continues to pace until another man stands to take his place. When this man takes the bow and arrows, all the men present shout. The *anigat yariman* sits down and the man now holding the bow begins to talk, following the same routine. The substitution of one speaker for another continues until dawn.

The speeches that follow the opening words of the *anigat yariman* elaborate upon or attempt to refute what has

already been said. A speaker may propose alternative scenarios to account for the sorcery, perhaps describing how the patient or his kin have failed to fulfill their exchange obligations, leaving themselves vulnerable to *bom-mirim*. Speakers from the *bonman* (other clans) may try to minimize the seriousness of any conflicts between themselves and the patient's kin. A *bonman* may make reference to conflicts among the patient's relatives. Other cases of sorcery that are relevant from a historical perspective or appropriate as analogies are also mentioned.

At dawn the discussion ends with *kubuk* shouting. The *anigat yariman* takes up the bow and arrows and goes outside to shoot an arrow shaft into the air. Although the arrow seems to be a metaphor for the illness, the people I spoke with did not recognize this interpretation.

A *kibirat* does not identify the sorcerer. Instead, it is a forum for identifying a number of persons who may be responsible for the sorcery. There is no attempt to formulate a public consensus about what has been discussed. Ambiguities and inconsistencies are not resolved and differing points of view are not reconciled. Since the results of *kibirat* are indeterminate, they can be used to support a number of alternative scenarios.

The day after a *kibirat*, some of the people who were singled out or accused of sorcery may try to clear their names by means of an ordeal. They prepare a small amount of

food and bring it to the patient. If the patient eats the food and shows no ill effects, it indicates that the person who prepared the food was not responsible for the illness. If the patient reacts to the food by turning away or vomiting, suspicions against the person who prepared the food increase. Similarly, a suspect may come to the patient's house and wash him with water; if the patient responds by turning away or becoming upset, this is taken as an indication that the suspect is responsible for the illness.

In order to treat an illness caused by *bom* or *mirim*, it is necessary to influence the sorcerer. Sorcery proceedings do not identify the sorcerer, but produce a contested set of suspects and plausible scenarios. The social pressure that this generates is intended to persuade the sorcerer to stop the sorcery, allowing the patient to recover.

**Post-Mortem Sorcery Divinations: *Awon Monbe***

After a death attributed to *kumka* or *kuman* assault sorcery occurs, the relatives of the deceased may wish to acquire information about the assault and the assailant as well as to deter future attacks. They may sponsor a pig-killing divination known as *awon monbe*, which literally means "pig shoot." Another name for the procedure is *awon aruk*; *at aruk* is a tree with red sap beneath its bark. By analogy, *awon aruk* refers to one potential outcome of the

ritual, the "marking" of a person with the blood of a pig. Like *kibirat*, *awon monbe* does not positively identify the sorcerer but produces information about suspects and plausible scenarios. The information comes from the interpretation of a series of physical signs produced by the divination and by the testing of specific hypotheses.

*Awon monbe* may be held as soon as the day after the burial or as late as several weeks after. In the past, burial was delayed until after the body had decomposed. An exposure platform was constructed on the side of the house, built on an angle so that fluids draining from the body would run off. It was painted with white clay, which was said to dissipate the smell from the body. After the corpse had decomposed, the skeleton, especially the skull and long bones, was extracted and buried, often directly under house of the deceased.

These practices have been supplanted by Western funerary practices. The corpse is put on display inside the house for several days while close kin are sent for. After the wake, the body is transferred to a rough-hewn coffin and carried to the community graveyard. A shelter is erected over the grave to protect it from animals and rain.

The decision to conduct *awon monbe* depends on several factors, including ownership of a pig or the ability to purchase one. The identity of the deceased, including his age, gender, and the size and strength of his clan,

influence the decision as well. If there have been several deaths in a short time span, it is more likely that *awon monbe* will be held, for there will be greater interest in its results.

The night before *awon monbe*, several arrows with bamboo blades are painted red, yellow, and black with clay and charcoal. A cowrie shell valuable may be tied to the top of the arrow shaft. The arrows are put on the grave of the deceased by a close male relative, who calls out to the deceased, telling him to "show" the pig who was responsible for his death. The arrows are left overnight on the grave.

The next morning the villagers gather in one place and form a broad circle. The members of each clan stand together. A domestic pig is led to the center of the circle, where it is fed sago and bananas which have been placed on top of an article of the deceased's clothing. Several men stand ready with bows and the arrows that have been retrieved from the gravesite. Either a close relative of the deceased or a knowledgeable senior man again calls out to the deceased, telling him to show the pig who was responsible for the death.

The arrows are aimed at the pig's heart and shot at the same time. In its death throes, the pig runs shrieking from the center of the circle. It seeks to escape, but each time it turns, it encounters a wall of people obstructing its path. The people in the circle are not supposed to move

away from the rampaging pig, even if it is running directly towards them. Like bullfighters, they brave the pig's charge, confident that at the last moment it will change directions. Eventually the pig collapses within the circle.

After the pig collapses, a small group of men carefully retrace its movements while the rest of the community remains standing in the circle. The men pay close attention to the points at which the pig approached the circle of villagers and look to see who is standing nearby. If the pig collided with someone standing in the circle, marking him with blood, then the person's clan is implicated in the sorcery. This mark is the source of the ritual's alternative name, *awon aruk*. A person struck by the pig will immediately deny any complicity in the sorcery and suggest that the mark refers to someone else in his clan.<sup>6</sup>

Tracing the movements of the pig reveals a number of other signs as well, which have been summarized in Table 3 below. If the arrow falls with the concave side of the blade facing the earth, this indicates that the sorcerer is from the village. Conversely, if the arrow falls with its convex side down, it indicates that the sorcerer is from outside the village. If the pig's wound is hidden from sight when the animal collapses, it indicates that the

---

<sup>6</sup>Saying, for example, "it wasn't me, the mark is behind me, it is marking my people (or clan)." (*Nembet ban, ne yoman aruk, ne karup aruk*).

sorcerer is from within the village. If the wound is visible, it indicates that the sorcerer is not from the village.

An arrow or stake may be placed in the ground beside the pig's head, oriented in the direction indicated by the pig's gaze or its snout. From the arrow or stake, a line is traced across the horizon to the sorcerer's village or clan territory. Alternatively, a small target shrub (Croton sp.) may be planted in the ground beside the pig. By morning the plant will be leaning to one side, indicating the direction of the sorcerer's village or clan territory.

The pig's reaction to the cowrie shell valuable tied to the arrow is also carefully observed. If the pig pulls at the cowrie shell before dying, it indicates that the sorcery was motivated by problems surrounding exchange obligations. If the pig tries to "eat" the cowrie shell tied to the arrow, it indicates that the *kumka* or *kuman* assault sorcerers were given cowrie shells or other valuable to carry out the attack (a practice known as *kewot*, see below).

Table 3: Signs from Pig-killing Divination

SIGN	VARIABLES	INDICATIONS
contact with pig	both contact and blood	singles out clan
" "	blood only	no indication
" "	contact only	no indication
" "	person moves to avoid pig	singles out clan
arrow blade	concave down	sorcerer fr. settlement
" "	concave up	from outside settlement
wound to pig	hidden	from within settlement
" " "	visible	from outside settlement
pig's eyes	direction facing	indicates settlement
pig's snout	" "	" "
plant <u>croton</u>	direction facing the next morning	indicates settlement
cowrie shell	pig ignores	debts not involved
" "	pig pulls at	killed because of debts
" "	pig tries to eat	arranged killing (kewot)
verbal injunction	response	statement true
	no response	statement may be false
mark sticks	pork uncooked	clan involved
" "	pork cooked	clan may not be involved

After examining all the physical evidence from the pig-killing, a small group of relatives and knowledgeable men gather around the body of the pig. One man calls to the deceased, asking him to direct the pig's response to several questions. The man describes several potential scenarios accounting for the sorcery killing. After presenting each scenario or case, he calls upon the pig to open its eyes or kick its legs, or for blood to flow freely from the its

mouth, nose, or wounds, if the scenario that was presented is true. The statements are phrased so that only a positive response will verify the information presented; the lack of a response is not taken as negative evidence. As the men huddle over the pig, the crowd begins to disperse.

After the last scenario has been tested, the pig is taken away to be butchered. The meat is shared among the relatives of the deceased, people who helped with the funeral, and people who had given meat to the deceased.

The pork kept by the household of the deceased can be used to produce further information about the sorcery killing. A number of short sticks may be collected and marked with different clan signs, e.g. the design of a sago tree for Kuman clan (from *Kuem* sago). Each stick is wrapped up with a section of pork in a banana leaf. All of the banana leaf packets are cooked together for the same amount of time. If one section of pork remains uncooked when the packets are opened, the clan indicated by the mark on the stick is implicated in the sorcery assault.

Op, an elderly man from Mindiptanah, Irian Jaya, was assaulted and killed by a *kuman* at Dome Refugee Camp. The death was the second in the camp in a short period of time; an old man, Yanggam, Op's neighbor and friend, died a few weeks before.<sup>7</sup> There was concern that the two deaths were

---

<sup>7</sup>The deaths were probably the result of an epidemic of influenza. The medical worker in the village reported the cause of Op's death as dehydration from diarrhea.

related and that the *kuman* would strike again soon. Two days after Op's funeral, the people from the refugee camp gathered in front of Op's house for *awon monbe*:

When the pig was shot, it avoided the people standing in a semi-circle in front of Op's house. The pig ran directly under the house, staining the posts with blood.

Two sticks were inserted into the ground, one at the pig's eyes, the other at its snout. A small cluster of men, mostly Op's agnates, stood over the pig. One of the men took hold of one of the pig's eyelids and pulled on it. He called on Op to show a sign if what they had to say was true. Then he began describing scenarios that may have led up to Op's death, proposing the following:

(1) Yanggam's son Tomi married a woman and did not pay her bridewealth. Tomi's affines came and killed Yanggam and then killed his neighbor Op.

(2) The people in Dome village have been complaining about the refugees using their land. They paid someone (known as *kewot*, see below) to kill Op because he was a refugee.

(3) Both Yanggam and Op opposed the Papua New Guinea government's plan to move the refugees from the camps to a relocation center in East Awin. A Yonggom refugee already at the relocation center paid a third party (*kewot*, see below) to kill both Yanggam and Op.

(4) A *kuman* killed Dabuna's wife. Op used Dabuna's land and regularly brought him food in return. Op helped Dabuna make revenge sorcery (*bop-mirim*, see below) against the *kuman* who killed his wife. That is why the *kuman* killed Op.

(5) Tomi used to spend time in the rain forest with a man who belonged to the political organization *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Free Papua Movement). Tomi found a pig in a trap and went to make a fire, leaving his friend alone. Indonesian soldiers found and killed his friend. The members of the friend's clan killed both Tomi's father Yanggam and his neighbor Op.

(6) Op ate a pig that was poisoned by the Indonesians and that is why he died.<sup>8</sup>

(7) The pig ran under Op's house and stained the houseposts with blood. One of Op's wives killed him.

After each statement the men called upon the pig to show a sign if the statement was true. The pig did not respond to any of the statements. The eyes and snout of the pig were examined and they faced west-southwest, which suggested that a refugee from Mindiptanah killed Op. The arrow landed with the concave side of the blade down. The wound was visible. No cowrie had been tied to the arrow.

The information produced by *awon monbe* is ambiguous and inconsistent. Some signs are difficult to decipher, such as the position of an arrow or wound. Not all of the signs are applicable in each case. The pig may die immediately or cowrie shells may not have been tied to the arrow. The signs may be contradictory. In the case above, the arrow blade indicated that the sorcerer was from the settlement, while the wound indicated that the sorcerer was from outside the settlement.

Interpretations of the events at an *awon monbe* also vary. People disagree about what took place during the

---

<sup>8</sup>This hypothesis refers to an inflammatory article published in the Times of Papua New Guinea shortly before Op's death. The article summarized Hyndman's (1987) assertion that the tapeworm Taenia solium, which is the source of potentially fatal human cysticercosis, was deliberately introduced into Irian Jaya by the Indonesians. Hyndman's claim that the refugees from Irian Jaya in Papua New Guinea and their pigs were infected by the parasite led to considerable upset among the refugees. Available medical evidence, however, including seriological study (Fritzsche 1988) and clinical examination (George Nurse p.c. 1989) do not substantiate the claim that the refugees have been exposed to T. solium.

brief interval after the pig was shot and before it collapsed. The distance across the circle may limit visibility. It is not always clear if the pig brushed against someone or if someone moved to avoid the pig, a sign of complicity. Other signs are only recognized by a few people, such as the significance of an arrow blade which has broken off in the wound. Only rarely is there a response from the pig when the scenarios are presented. Few people listen to the scenarios and are able to observe the response of the pig; others must rely on hearsay and speculation.

There is no attempt to formulate a public consensus regarding the interpretation of an *awon monbe*. Since the results of *awon monbe* are essentially indeterminate, they can be used to support a number of alternative scenarios:

A few weeks after Dako, a man about forty, died suddenly from a *kuman* assault, his relatives held *awon monbe*. The pig was held in a cage and released the moment it was shot. It ran forward several feet and abruptly collapsed. Dako's half-brother Eweyok proposed two possible scenarios for the sorcery killing, but there was no response from the pig to either:

(1) Dako was trying to acquire the bridewealth payment from his SiDa's marriage, but her affines had not settled the debt. Perhaps the affines had killed Dako because they did not want to pay the bridewealth.

(2) Eweyok recently married his third wife (the first two are deceased). Her relatives did not want her to marry Eweyok and showed their displeasure by charging him an exorbitant bridewealth (K8,000).<sup>9</sup> Perhaps Eweyok's affines killed Dako because of Eweyok's marriage.

---

<sup>9</sup>Roughly three times the average bridewealth.

Afterwards I spoke individually with a number of people about their impressions of the results from the *awon monbe*:

(1) Eweyok told me that because the pig tried to eat the cowrie shell, it was an arranged killing (*kewot*, see below). Because the pig did not run forward or respond to any of the scenarios, he did not learn anything else about Dako's death.

(2) Atani, a member of Eweyok's wife's clan, said that because the pig fell on its wounds, a clan from the village participated in the *kuman* assault that killed Dako. The pig, however was looking towards the town of Kiunga, so the *kuman* might be staying there.

(3) Kutem, Atani's half-brother and the guardian of Eweyok's wife, made the same observations as Atani. Kutem also said that Eweyok had confessed his responsibility for Dako's death.

(4) Elias, a close friend of Dako's, said that the pig pulled at the cowrie shell, but did not try to eat it. He said that this meant that Dako had been killed because of an outstanding exchange obligation. He agreed with the first scenario that Eweyok proposed, that the Dako's SiDa's affines may have been responsible for the assault.

(5) Several other people suggested a different scenario. The day before Dako died, he went into the swamps to collect sago leaves for roofing material. A man named Awarakuk was seen leaving the same sago swamp that afternoon and had later been seen acting suspiciously. Awarakuk is an eccentric, unmarried man, who is frequently accused of being involved in *kumka* and *kuman* assault sorcery. Perhaps Awarakuk killed Dako or led a *kuman* to kill him.

(6) Several people suggested that the *awon monbe* was a failure because the pig did not point anyone out and none of the signs revealed anything.

Like *kibirat*, *awon monbe* does not positively identify the person responsible for sorcery, but produces plausible scenarios. And like *kibirat*, *awon monbe* is intended to influence the sorcerer and discourage further assaults.

**Sorcery for Hire: Kewot**

There are several exceptions to the general assumption that *kumka* and *kuman* assault sorcerers carefully choose their victims. Thus, frustrated by the lack of an opportunity to attack a specific person, a *kumka* or *kuman* may strike out at the first vulnerable person he encounters. Or, a *kumka* or *kuman* may attack someone who has inadvertently seen him kill someone else. Or, if the *kumka* or *kuman* suspects that he has been identified and is in danger, he may try to kill as many people as possible before his own death.

Other *kumka* or *kuman* assaults are carried out in exchange for payment from a third party.<sup>10</sup> This type of arranged assault is known as *kewot*. Strangers, associates, and even a prospective victim's close kin may be asked to carry out a *kewot* attack. Someone who turns down a request to carry out a *kewot* attack is considered vulnerable to attack by the person who eventually accepts the request.

The decision to arrange a *kewot* assault, rather than carrying out the task oneself, is considered a practical choice. For example, a person chosen to carry out the attack may have a better chance of being alone with the intended victim:

---

<sup>10</sup>Before the introduction of currency, payment would be made in valuables such as cowries or nassa shells, or in consumables such as tobacco.

Kore and Norotman were angry because their FaBrSo Dabuna had many sons whereas they had none; they were afraid that Dabuna's sons would take over all of the clan's land. The two brothers gave a hammer and five Kina to an Awin (Aekyom) man to kill one of Dabuna's sons. The Awin man went to Daru where two of Dabuna's sons were attending school. He had no access to them, so he gave the hammer and the money to an Awin student at the school.

The Awin student found one of Dabuna's sons alone in the school dormitory and struck him with the hammer. In the ensuing struggle, both students were fatally injured. Shortly before the Awin student died, he revealed this story.

A person suffering from *bom-mirim* may not be the intended victim of the sorcerer. This can happen by mistake if the substance collected for the sorcery packet belongs to someone other than the intended victim:

Ambogap's sister married Yomdoan, but Yomdoan refused to pay the agreed-upon bridewealth. Ambogap decided to make *mirim* against Yomdoan's sister Birit, so he stole a pair of underpants from the clothesline in front of her house. The underpants, however, belonged to Kendemo and not to Birit. When Ambogap made *mirim*, Kendemo became ill and died.

#### Retribution Sorcery: *Bop mirim*

The relatives of someone killed by sorcery may use *bop mirim* retribution sorcery, which is effective against a sorcerer even though his identity is unknown.

*Bop mirim* is used the hair of the deceased in order to kill the sorcerer. *Bop* means both death and corpse. The techniques involved are similar to those used for *bom* and *mirim* packet sorcery. One man was said to have made a *bop mirim* sorcery packet containing several of his deceased

wife's hairs, a millepede's "teeth," and a piece of sharp reed. He climbed a *kenem* tree, which is used to make canoes, and placed the packet in a hole. At the time my research ended, he was still waiting for the *bop mirim* to take effect.

A technique called *koyambom bop mirim* involves putting a similar sorcery packet inside the mouth of a turtle (*koyambon*). The mouth and anus of the turtle are then closed off with thorns. A mark is made on the turtle shell and the turtle is thrown into the water. A relative of the deceased calls out, "the person who killed our relative, you must go down, come up, and go down again." The turtle will sink, surface, and then disappear beneath the water.

It takes several months to a year for *bop mirim* to take effect. Typically a *bop mirim* victim develops an insatiable appetite and gorges himself on huge amounts of food, but does not become fat. His hunger becomes so overwhelming that he tries to eat anything within his reach. He may eat tobacco or paper or handfuls of clay. He may tear up pieces of cloth and swallow them. He becomes a gross caricature of gluttony and greed.

If someone begins to behave in this manner, it is recognized that he is dying from *bop mirim*. At night he will call out the name of the person he killed, saying that the person's *kinggen* (soul) will not let him sleep. He will mumble incoherently if questioned about sorcery. His

relatives will not call for discussions or *kibirat* to consider the reason for his illness. A victim of *bop mirim* is considered responsible for his fate and relatives feel no sympathy for him:

Aromgot, a seventeen year old girl, went to bathe in the river. When she returned to the house, she became sick and died. Her father made *koyambom bop mirim* with her hair.

A few months later, Timinae Ogon, a man about thirty years old, began acting oddly. He started eating all kinds of inappropriate things, such as tobacco, plastic bags, charcoal, and his own clothes.

No one tried to help him; they knew he had killed Aromgot. When people walked past him, he would reach out and grab them. Late at night he would keep people awake with his chatter. Finally his relatives shut him up inside an empty building. Soon afterwards he died.

Not all deaths attributed to *bop mirim* follow this pattern. Other deaths are attributed to *bop mirim* if the link between the original sorcerer and the avenged victim can be established:

Despite Nonggok's efforts to help his wife Kendemo, including holding a *kibirat*, she died. He cut her hair and made *yinbep bop mirim* by placing the hair between the jaws of a crocodile (*yinbep*) skull. He placed the bones in the shelf above his hearth.

Later Nonggok heard that Ambogap, a man from Buseki village, was very sick. Ambogap's arms and legs became paralyzed and soon afterwards he died.

Nonggok attributed Ambogap's death to *bop mirim* and concluded that Ambogap was responsible for Kendemo's death. He pieced together the story that Ambogap killed her by mistake after stealing the wrong piece of clothing (see above).

**Regional Meetings to Discuss Sorcery: At Kawenepinbon**

Several months after a death attributed to sorcery, the relatives of the deceased may organize an *at kawenepinbon* regional meeting to discuss unresolved sorcery cases. The regional dimension of these meetings is significant. Many cases of sorcery involve people from other places and these meetings provide the information necessary to evaluate the connections between different cases of sorcery.

Invitations to attend *at kawenepinbon* are sent out a some days in advance.<sup>11</sup> As the guests arrive, they spend time discussing different sorcery cases in small groups. The public discussion begins when the sponsor of *at kawenepinbon* calls everyone to a central location. The sponsor climbs up on a tree stump and addresses the crowd. This is the source of the name *at kawenepinbon*, which literally means "tree-climbing place." Like *kibirat*, one man speaks at a time; when he is finished, the next speaker takes his place on the tree stump. The content of the discussion is also similar to that at *kibirat*, except that a much wider range of actors and situations are considered.

Dabuna's wife Munop was killed by a *kuman* (see above). Several weeks later Dabuna held *awon monbe*, but the pig ran under the house of its owner after it was shot, so the results were considered uninformative.

---

<sup>11</sup>Notification of a date in advance was recorded by means of a fern stem with the same number of leaflets as there were days until the event, or a block of sago with the number of days until the event indicated by notches or lines.

Dabuna bought a second pig for *awon monbe*, but then slaughtered it for consumption. He made *bop mirim* from his wife's hair, but was impatient for its results. He sent out messages to people from six or seven villages to come and talk about his wife's death at an at *kawenipinbon* regional meeting.

A tarp was raised in the center of the village and by late afternoon the villagers and guests had settled down. The discussion of Dabuna's wife's death and other deaths continued past daybreak.

During these meetings, information about past cases of sorcery that have some bearing on the present case are discussed. Old sorcery accusations are rehashed. There is talk about outstanding exchange obligations and exhortations to people to settle their debts. Recent deaths throughout the region are described and possible scenarios accounting for these deaths are debated.

Even when it is publicly acknowledged that someone died as a result of *bop mirim*, there may be disagreement about the scenario linking the sorcerer to his victim. I heard two different stories linking the deaths of Kendemo and Ambogap. The first story, given above, attributes Kendemo's death to Ambogap's theft of the wrong article of clothing.

To repeat:

Ambogap's sister married Yomdoan, but he refused to pay her bridewealth. Ambogap decided to make *mirim* against Yomdoan's sister Birimit, so he stole a pair of underpants from the clothesline in front of her house. The underpants, however, belonged to Kendemo and not to Birimit. When Ambogap made *mirim*, Kendemo became ill and died.

In the second scenario, Ambogap kills Kendemo deliberately because of a dispute over the payment of a bridewealth:

Ambogap's FaBrDa (*daman*) married Nem's MoBrSo (*mom*), but the young man did not pay any of the bridewealth. The woman broke off the marriage, presumably because her relatives were complaining about her husband's failure to pay the bridewealth. Ambogap was angry about the failed marriage and deliberately stole Kendemo's underpants in order to make *mirim*. Nem and Nonggok refer to each other as *awo*, classificatory grandfather and grandson, which is why Ambogap attacked Nonggok's wife.

One of the accomplishments of the discussions at at *kawenepinbon* is to put specific cases of sorcery into larger sequences of events. Information from different sorcery cases is used to construct complex "genealogies" of sorcery and death:

Norotman was angry because his brother Kanong married Eretin. Norotman felt that he had the right to marry Eretin, because he had revenged her father's death in a raid. Several years after the marriage, Norotman paid a man named Birit to make *mirim* to kill Kanong and Eretin's young daughter.

Birit agreed to make the *mirim* because he was in a vulnerable position. He had recently fled his own land because his elder brother had killed a man and he feared revenge from that man's relatives.

After his daughter died, Kanong made *bop mirim* retribution sorcery and killed Birit. When Birit's relatives learned of his death, they inquired and learned that Norotman had forced Birit to make the *mirim* that killed the girl. They were angry and paid someone (*kewot*) to turn into a *kumka* and kill Norotman.

When Norotman died, people were sad, but realized that it was his own fault and decided not to seek revenge.

These stories told at at *kawenepinbon* regional meetings confirm the social reality of sorcery and make isolated cases of sorcery a part of a larger social history.

### **Sorcery and Retribution**

In every society in which illness and death are attributed to sorcery, the possibility exists that violence will be carried out against persons accused of sorcery. Among the Yonggom, prior to the imposition of the colonial order, persons suspected of sorcery were sometimes killed in reprisal raids. However, given that nearly all deaths among the Yonggom are attributed to sorcery, direct and violent retaliation against persons suspected of sorcery was relatively infrequent.

In contrast, among the Gebusi of the Strickland plains of Papua New Guinea, attributions of responsibility for sorcery are "frequently accompanied by extreme physical violence against the suspect..." (Knauft 1985:1). Despite the prevailing ethos of camaraderie and "good company," the Gebusi have a very high murder rate. What accounts for the difference between the Gebusi and the Yonggom in the frequency of violent responses against suspected sorcerers?

Among the Yonggom, violent responses to sorcery are largely forestalled by the indeterminate results of sorcery proceedings. The lack of agreement about the identity of the sorcerer acts as a buffer against potential violence. Not only are the close kin of the victim uncertain about whom to blame, but a direct and violent response to sorcery would invite retaliation. In addition, narratives which

link the use of retribution sorcery to particular deaths establish an alternative to violent retaliation.<sup>12</sup>

One of the interesting features of the Yonggom response to sorcery is that it operates not through the establishment of consensus but rather by avoiding consensus. In contrast, Gebusi sorcery inquests allow a "...public consensus to emerge... to a definite conclusion" and "there is strong belief in the validity of the... indictments..." (Knauft 1985:331). Consensus appears to facilitate violence in the Gebusi case, while indeterminacy reduces the potential for violence in the Yonggom case.<sup>13</sup>

Also at issue is the general social problem of restraining violence against persons held accountable for illness and death. There are many ways in which such retaliation is limited in different societies. Tuzin (1980), for example, has described how, in response to the cessation of warfare, the Ilahita Arapesh shifted attributions of responsibility for death from enemy sorcerers and their local accomplices to the spirits of the Tambaran cult. This change alleviated social tensions

---

<sup>12</sup>Another mechanism limiting violent retaliation is the emigration of persons who have been accused of sorcery.

<sup>13</sup>Knauft (1985:101) also suggests that the Gebusi use a "person-for-person" model of exchange, in which objects can not be substituted for persons. This precludes acceptance of compensation as a peaceful means of resolving sorcery cases. Although objects may be accepted in compensation for persons in some forms of Yonggom exchange (e.g. bride wealth), the Yonggom do not seek compensation from persons accused of sorcery.

associated with sorcery accusations. Evans-Pritchard (1937) argued that among the Azande, the malevolent powers which cause misfortune, illness, and death are unconscious and uncontrolled. This may alleviate much of the person's responsibility for witchcraft and give him or her limited protection from retaliation (although cf: Schieffelin 1976). Were it not for such factors limiting direct retaliation against persons considered responsible for illness and death, there would be more societies with homicide rates similar to that of the Gebusi.

#### **Conclusions: Sorcery and the Social Use of Indeterminacy**

The Yonggom response to sorcery is predicated on the avoidance of consensus. One aspect of this process is that the most socially-disruptive potential consequence of sorcery belief, violent retaliation against persons suspected of sorcery, is limited. However, interesting questions are also raised about the social use of ambiguity, divergent opinions, and the avoidance of consensus.

Despite differences of opinion about whether an assault was carried out by a *kumka* or a *kuman*, or whether *bom* or *mirim* is responsible for a given illness, Yonggom accounts of sorcery are very consistent. Descriptions of cases of illness and death are interpreted in terms of the general explanatory model offered by sorcery. Even the conflicts which generate sorcery accusations exhibit a certain degree

of uniformity. Problems relating to unrequited reciprocity are the basis of most sorcery accusations.

In contrast, discussions and divinations that are intended to identify the sorcerer produce information that is ambiguous and subject to dispute. This information is not reconciled in any public forum and is essentially indeterminate. What is produced is a contested set of suspects and plausible scenarios, not an accepted conclusion. Even though, for example, a close relative of the deceased may stand beside the deceased's grave before *awon monbe* in order to exhort the spirit of the deceased to identify the sorcerer, the results of such rituals are inconclusive.

While the accounts of sorcery cases and the procedures used to identify sorcerers seem to form a closed system of knowledge, in practice the system results in ambiguity rather than answers. In part, this can be seen as what Evans-Pritchard (1937) referred to as mechanisms for avoiding falsification. Rosen (1991) has recently suggested that "ambiguity, indeterminacy, and uncertainty" may be more productive metaphors for culture than "structure, order, and integrity." Among the Yonggom, the maintenance of indeterminacy is more than a metaphor; it is an important cultural process.

Much as the lapse in memory attributed to a victim of assault sorcery is an essential component of the

plausibility of the attack, the process of indeterminacy shapes Yonggom ideas about sorcery. With the exception of procedures for obtaining vengeance or retribution, sorcery as such is not practiced by the Yonggom. It is produced as a reality through inference about the cause of illness and death.

These inferences, however, are not about the techniques of sorcery or the details of a particular case of illness or death, which have standard and acceptable answers. The question for the Yonggom is not, how does sorcery operate, but rather, what motivates a sorcerer? The inferences that the Yonggom make about sorcery refer to the indeterminacy of human behavior and emotions. The essential uncertainties of human character, and the inability to determine motivation except through inference, are reflected in the ambiguous outcomes of sorcery proceedings. Furthermore, Yonggom experience of sorcery, which is their interpretation of illness and death, influences the cultural construction of their emotions, as well as their ideas about human character and motivation. This is the subject of the following chapter.

**Chapter Five: The Emotional Context of Sorcery**

When an old man dies and his sons had neither cared for him nor listened to him, we think of the things that he knew, but did not teach them. Maybe they are forgotten. It makes us very sad (*mimyop darewop*).

-- Buka Nandun

**Introduction: Sorcery and Emotions among the Yonggom**

The motivating force for explanations of sorcery is the emotional response to illness and death. When a member of the community becomes ill or dies, it is the emotional response to the situation which provides the impetus for discussions, rituals, and accusations of sorcery. Under these circumstances, emotions roil like moisture in the air on a hot day; they become visible in a way in which they ordinarily are not. Yonggom sorcery cannot be fully understood without examining these emotions.

Among the Yonggom, there are many emotions associated with illness and death, including strong feelings of grief, sorrow, and loss. People are angry at the sorcerer, whether or not he or she has been identified, and frightened that the sorcery may take another life. This fear may result in feelings of personal vulnerability. Other emotions are attributed to the sorcerer, including the resentment and anger that motivated him to endanger others or take a life. By drawing public attention to the sorcerer as a suspect, it is hoped that he can be shamed into reforming his behavior. These emotions have a familiar cast to them and, belief in

sorcery aside, they appear as reasonable and understandable responses to the circumstances.

Upon closer examination, however, these emotions may be distinguished from our own because they operate according to the logic of reciprocity. Sorrow, for example, is conceptualized in terms of loss and the resolution of feelings of sorrow is dependent upon obtaining replacement or compensation for that which has been lost.

### **Reciprocity, Self and Emotions**

Schieffelin (1976, 1980, 1983) has described how reciprocity is the organizing principle for a variety of cultural experiences among the Kaluli. He defines "opposition scenarios" as typical programs or sequences of events which lead to culturally-defined resolutions of problems. These scenarios have everyday informal use in which very different situations are assimilated into well-known courses of action. Schieffelin shows that not only events, but also emotions are associated through reciprocity and the opposition scenario.

The dynamic that links different emotions is dramatized in the Kaluli gisaro ceremony, in which songs move people to tears (cf: Feld 1982). Thus moved, the people in the audience burn the gisaro dancers in angry retaliation and seek compensation from them for their sorrow. Sorrow and anger are thus paired through reciprocity and the opposition

scenario. Schieffelin also shows how the same dynamic is present in Kaluli witchcraft. Discussing the need to resolve the powerful emotions of anger, grief, and fear associated with death, he suggests that, "if the sei [Kaluli witch] did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him" (1976:147). Anger is associated with witchcraft not so much through the discovery of the cause of a death, but in the formulation of a response to the emotions that death produces. The opposition scenario allows for the resolution of these emotions through the attribution of responsibility for witchcraft.

Reciprocity has particular significance in Melanesia given local conceptions of the self. Persons in Melanesia, as Leenhardt (1979 [1947]) pointed out, are better seen as persons in relationships than discrete individuals. Exchange constructs social persons through relationships, and reciprocity is the basis for the maintenance of the self. This is exhibited in the Yonggom view that nurturance contributes to the establishment of the self, and that unrequited reciprocity in the form of abandonment, separation, and loss threaten the self.

#### **Anthropological Approaches to Emotion**

In the past decade, anthropologists have shown renewed interest in the study of emotions. This has resulted in a number of studies which examine configurations of person,

self, and affect within particular cultural systems.<sup>1</sup> Most of these analyses share several assumptions. The first is that emotions are not locked away in the interiors of the mind, psyche, or biology, but are relational constructs. As such, emotions can be studied by examining interpersonal interaction, public institutions, and discourse. The second assumption is that emotions are cultural as well as psychological systems. Most of these studies, with the exception of those which are psychodynamic in orientation<sup>2</sup>, do not take Western theories as their starting point, but begin with ethnopsychology and work towards the development of comparative theory.<sup>3</sup>

There are several potential problems in analyzing emotions on the basis of these assumptions. The first is that emotions are more than a form of narrative discourse; they should not be separated from the social contexts in which they are evoked. A related issue is the over-emphasis upon emotions as spoken as opposed to being embodied or conveyed in actions. Another concern is that emotions

---

<sup>1</sup>For example, see Abu-Lughod (1986), Battaglia (1990), Lutz (1988), Rosaldo (1980), Schieffelin (1976), and Wikan (1990). Also see collections edited by Lutz and Abu-Lughod (1988), and Shweder and Levine (1984), and White and Kirkpatrick (1985).

<sup>2</sup>For example, see Crapanzano (1973, 1980), Herdt (1981), Kracke (1978), Levy (1973), and Obeyesekere (1981).

<sup>3</sup>Lutz (1988) compares American folk theories about emotions with Ifaluk ethnopsychology; Briggs similarly compares her own perceptions of events with those of the Utku.

should not be reduced to passionate politics: pragmatics should not be given precedence over the feeling states with which they are associated. A final issue is the comparability of accounts of different emotional systems: the challenge is to construct analyses that are comparable yet which do not lose sight of cultural distinctiveness.

Many successful studies of affect avoid these problems by examining emotions in relation to specific institutions or social processes. Such analyses link discourse to cultural context, balance pragmatic and expressive considerations, and provide for a means of comparability via the institution or process under study. Examples include Rosaldo's (1980) study of knowledge and passion in Ilongot headhunting, Abu-Lughod's (1986) description of gender and sentiment in Bedouin poetry, and Schieffelin's (1976) account of emotions and the gisaro ritual of the Kaluli.

A related strategy for analyzing emotions is to examine the contexts in which the subjects themselves discuss, debate, and manipulate emotions. An example of this approach is White's work on disentangling disputes in the Pacific (1985, 1989). White advocates studying "naturally occurring discourse about emotional experience... [in which] inferences about the social meaning of emotions..." have pragmatic force (1985:357). In such discourse, not only are ideas about emotions articulated, but people also draw conclusions about the meaning and significance of their

emotions. As Yonggom sorcery proceedings are based on inferences about human behavior and emotions, they provide an ideal context for this kind of analysis.

Among the Yonggom, inferences about sorcery draw on assumptions about emotions, character, and motivation. In this chapter, I do not discuss the entire range of Yonggom affect, but focus on those emotions closely related to sorcery, notably sorrow and loss, fear, anger, the ethos of deceit, and shame.

#### ***Mimyop (Sorrow and Loss)***

*Mimyop* is a compelling emotion that is publicly expressed and privately felt in response to misfortune, illness, and death. *Mimyop* is typically described as the response to circumstances in which a relationship is interrupted by physical separation or severed by death. *Mimyop* is also the name of the heart, which is said to be the place of origin of this feeling.

The feeling of loss that accompanies the interruption of a relationship is an important part of *mimyop*. This loss is often referred to in terms of the exchange through which the relationship was maintained. *Mimyop* was described to me as like "not having an *awo* (classificatory grandmother)." A person with an *awo* will never suffer from hunger, for she will always be waiting in the house to prepare food for him. Similarly, the loss of any nurturing relationship evokes

strong feelings of *mimyop*. *Mimyop* also refers to compassion; people feel *mimyop* for someone who has no family members to nurture or care for him or her, as in the case of an old man without a wife or children, or a widow without brothers or grown children.

In addition to misfortune and separation, people express feelings of *mimyop* for others whose relationships are being threatened. For instance, the response to someone who is the focus of another's anger is *mimyop*. Someone living alone, without anyone with whom to share food or converse (a condition known as *iwari*), also evokes feelings of *mimyop*.

Younger people express *mimyop* for their parents and grandparents who were adults during the early years of regular colonial influence (ca: 1940's and 1950's). Stories of early interactions between representatives of the Australian and Dutch governments and the Yonggom are sometimes bitter and sometimes hilarious, but the telling of any of these stories always evokes exclamations of *mimyop* on behalf the Yonggom men and women involved, who were unable to establish reciprocal relationships with colonial officials.

The opposite of *mimyop* is *kube*, which may be glossed as the feeling of contentedness that comes from a relationship. People feel *kube* when a relationship is renewed or reaffirmed, as when relatives or close friends reunite after

a period of separation. *Kube* was described to me as like "having an *awo* (classificatory grandmother). People feel *kube* when a new relationship is established, as when a man sees his brother's newborn son for the first time, or when a meal is shared by two people meeting for the first time. People express *kube* for the accomplishments of close relatives as well, as when a son shoots a pig or builds his own house for the first time. Unlike *mimyop*, *kube* is not attributed to a place within the body.

Feelings of *mimyop* are strongest in response to death, which severs relationships. The usual verb associated with *mimyop* is either *ip*, which means "there is" or "I have," or *kande*, which means "I took." Thus sorrow is often expressed by saying "*ne mimyop ip*," which means "I have sorrow," or "*ne mimyop kandan*," which means "I took sorrow." In the case of a death, however, the verb "*waande*," meaning "to cut," is generally used, as in "*mimyop waande*," which literally means "to cut sorrow." *Waande* is also used in the expression of other intensified emotions or feeling states, as when someone is so hungry that he experiences sharp pains: "*munggi waande*," meaning "to cut hunger." *Waande* is also the verb used for resentment (*wunggande*)<sup>4</sup> or when someone is startled and his soul (*kinggen*) is "cut" away from his body.

---

<sup>4</sup>Contraction of wunggu waande.

The use of the verb "waande," "to cut," in the expression of *mimyop* is reflected in a number of dream interpretations that associate "cutting" and loss. In Yonggom dream interpretations, there are standardized meanings for particular objects that appear or actions that occur within dreams. The interpretation of a dream in which a person's leg is cut is that an assault sorcerer (*kumka* or *kuman*) will attack and kill someone. A dream about cutting hair or a beard indicates that there will be a series of deaths. The association between cutting and loss is also illustrated by the taboo or restriction (*amop*) against cutting one's hair or beard after the death of a relative or close friend. The interpretation of a dream about cutting one's own hand is that one's child, younger sibling, dog, or pig will die. Similarly, a dream about cutting up a pig in order to sell the meat is considered to be about a death.

One of the responses to *mimyop* associated with a death is to avoid behaviors, foods, places, or objects associated with the deceased.

When Dako made arrangements to marry a young woman, it led him to think of his older brother, who had been killed by sorcery several years before. As Dako's brother died a bachelor, each time Dako considered marriage he became overwhelmed by feelings of *mimyop* for his brother. Over the years, Dako withdrew from several potential marriages. When he was forty years old, he finally decided to get married, but he was attacked by a sorcerer and died a bachelor.

After a death, strong feelings of *mimyop* lead to avoidance of places associated with the deceased. The features of the

rain forest landscape resonate with events from the life of the deceased, such as the tree in which a hornbill perched when struck by an arrow from his bow, the clearing he made for a campfire where a shared meal was prepared, or the pandanus tree he planted beside a trail. As people move through the rain forest, the stories associated with each place are repeated. Personal deeds become spatially anchored through these inscriptive practices (Battaglia n.d.b), and the landscape is transformed into a social version of history.

After a death, those closest to the deceased avoid the memories that echo through the rain forest by refusing to leave the cleared area surrounding the homestead or hamlet. People may burn down houses, abandon gardens or shelters, or move elsewhere for months or years.

Whereas local histories inscribed in the rain forest evoke *mimyop* for particular individuals who have died, culturally salient images in the natural environment evoke more generalized feelings of *mimyop*. These feeling may be internalized and personalized. The singing of the *kuni* bird (hooded butcherbird), for example, evokes memories of deceased relatives:

One morning Kutem Buru was alone clearing land for a new garden. He was chopping down trees when he heard the call of the *on kuni*. Kutem thought of mother's brother (*mom*), his elder brother (*ambang*), and his young daughter (*dana*), all of whom are deceased. He spontaneously composed and sang the following song:

*Kuni ye nemeng kawembarap, oh*                      The call of the *kuni* bird

	do not make me sad, oh
<i>Ne mom andit, oh</i>	My mother's brother, I said, oh
<i>Ne mom andit, oh</i>	My mother's brother, I said, oh
<i>Kuni ye nemeng kawembarap, oh</i>	The call of the <i>kuni</i> bird do not make me sad, oh
<i>Kuni ye nemeng kawembarap, oh</i>	The call of the <i>kuni</i> bird do not make me sad, oh
<i>Nambang andit, oh</i>	My elder brother I said, oh
<i>ambang andit, oh</i>	My elder brother I said, oh
<i>Kuni ye nemeng kawembarap, oh</i>	The call of the <i>kuni</i> bird do not make me sad, oh
<i>Kuni ye nemeng kawembarap, oh</i>	The call of the <i>kuni</i> bird do not make me sad, oh
<i>Ne dana andit, oh</i>	My daughter I said, oh
<i>Ne dana andit, oh</i>	My daughter I said, oh
<i>Kuni ye nemeng kawembarap, oh</i>	The call of the <i>kuni</i> bird do not make me sad, oh

As Kitem sang, he began to cry. Two men from the village arrived to help him prepare his garden; when they heard him singing and saw the tears on his face, they cried with him.

Some of the most compelling and evocative images in Yunggom culture derive their force from feelings of *mimyop* associated with senescence and death. One such image is that of the flowering sago palm. Sago palm trees (*om*) only flower once, usually after twelve to fifteen years of

growth. The trees should be harvested before they flower, as the efflorescence consumes the bulk of a tree's edible starch. A flowering sago palm, because its starch has gone to waste, evokes the observer's memories of those who once prepared sago for him as a child, but are now either deceased or too old to process sago. Jimmy Woia composed the following song about this image:

<i>Om bat det kok kanen bet winine?</i>	The flowering sago palm, who will fell the tree?
<i>Om bat det kok, kanen bet winine?</i>	The flowering sago palm, who will fell the tree?
<i>Nup ambe ya ku dukerep biwen kowe.</i>	Our fathers are already dead.
<i>Nup enna ya ku kiyom derep biwen.</i>	Our mothers are already too old.
<i>Nom bat det kok.</i>	Our flowering sago palm.

Sago (*om*) is the primary Yonggom dietary staple, and as such is an important symbol of nurturing behavior. Sago is closely associated with the persons who prepared this food for one as a child. Sago also becomes a powerful private symbol for feelings of *mimyop* after the death of this nurturing figure from one's childhood.

Dako, a bachelor about forty years old, told me that when he has no sago to eat, he thinks of his deceased aunt (FaBrWi, *nimba*) who made sago for him when he was a child, and feels *mimyop*. Sometimes when passing by a group of women making sago, he feels *mimyop* as well, as he knows that his aunt is not among them.

For an adult, sago is a bittersweet symbol; it combines fond memories of those who cared for one as a child with the

recognition of aging and death. The interpretation of a dream about processing sago emphasizes the latter meaning; such a dream is said to mean that there will be a death.

The association between *mimyop* and the loss of nurturance is particularly strong in the case of the death of a woman. During the wake of a woman who had been married and had a number of young children, one man commented,

When the mother dies, the house is cold; there is no one to prepare sago or cook, no one to build fires or take care of the house. A visitor to that house will feel that it is very cold. If the father had died and not the mother, it would not be as difficult, for the house would still be warm.

Nurturing behavior has a humanizing quality. The withdrawal of nurturance is depicted in myth as having catastrophic consequences:

There was a family with many children, but after the parents died, the children went to live with their aunt (FaBrWi, *nimba*).

The aunt had to work hard preparing and cooking food for all of her nephews and nieces and gradually she grew weary of caring for them. One day while her husband was hunting, she told the children that she was tired of feeding them, so they should leave and take care of themselves. Then she went away to make sago.

The children did not know what to do. The eldest went and cut some bamboo and leaves and made a pair of wings for himself. He ran around and around, hopping and jumping, trying to fly. Finally he leaped high into the air, beat his wings, and flew up into a tree.

He called down to his brothers and sisters, telling them to make wings as he had done. Soon the clearing in front of the house was filled with small children running, jumping, and trying to fly.

When the aunt returned home at the end of the day, she was surprised that the house was quiet. She looked around for the children and heard them up in the trees.

She felt sorry for them and called for them to come down and eat the sago she had made that day.

The children refused her invitation. A group of flying foxes gathered together in the trees and began to fly away, filling the sky with the beating of their wings. It was the children; they had all turned into flying foxes. They told their aunt to tell her husband what had happened, for he had always been kind to them, and then they flew away.

When the aunt's husband returned from hunting, he, too, noticed how quiet the house was. His wife was inside crying. Her eyes were red and swollen and her lips and throat were so dry that she could not speak. She related the story to him with gestures and then she died.

This story illustrates a common theme of many Yonggom myths, that unrequited reciprocity has potentially catastrophic consequences (see Feld 1982; see also Chapter Seven). The aunt breaks off her relationship with the children, telling them to care for themselves. Her withdrawal of nurturance is portrayed in the myth as a denial of the humanity of the children; as a result, they become animals. The Yonggom view nurturance as an essential part of human interaction and its denial or withdrawal to be dehumanizing.

*Mimyop* is a particularly compelling emotion. A technique of oration is to compel the listeners to respond by calling attention to circumstances that evoke feelings of *mimyop*:

Uran, an elderly refugee living in Dome camp, spoke at a regional meeting to discuss sorcery (at *kawenepinbon*) in response to a response to an angry speech by a Dome landowner about how the refugees were hunting on his land. Uran said,

We did not come here in order to hunt on their land, but to gain independence for ourselves. OPM

OPM [the political movement]<sup>5</sup> told us to leave our land and stay close to the border. We chose Dome because our kin are here and we are one family.

But I have no family and live by myself. Look at my body: I am not strong. I spend all of my time inside my house. No one comes to bring me meat. I have no wife, no brothers or sisters, and no sons or daughters.

In the morning I wake up and make a fire and there is nothing to cook. I just make a fire and wait to see whether anyone will bring me food. I have no people from my clan here. I will stay in the house and I will die; they will bury me here (and not on my own land).

I built a small house in the forest at the mouth of Den creek so that I could make a small garden. Too many refugees were coming to hunt on that land, so I had to leave my house and come back to the camp, otherwise they would blame me.

When Uran spoke about being isolated, lonely, and abandoned (a condition known as *iwari*), he evoked a powerful response of *mimyop* among the audience. His speech provoked debate and led the villagers to reconsider their position on the question of land use by the refugees.

In short, *mimyop* is a powerfully compelling emotion evoked by misfortune, separation, and death. It incorporates feelings of sorrow and loss and is associated with the withdrawal of nurturance, which has a humanizing quality. Feelings of *mimyop* also initiate a social dynamic in which one seeks to recover, replace, or gain compensation for that which has been lost.

---

<sup>5</sup>Organisasi Papua Merdeka, or "Free Papua Movement," the organization fighting for the independence of Irian Jaya from Indonesia.

### **Mimyop and Exchange**

In general, relationships among the Yonggom are defined, represented, and maintained through processes of exchange. When a relationship is severed by death, the response to the loss that is felt may also be defined in terms of exchange. Such transactions are known as *bop kibi*, which are a form of mortuary exchanges.<sup>6</sup>

In some *bop kibi* transactions, close relatives take the place of the deceased in his exchange relationships. Debts owed the deceased may be settled by making payments to his relatives. These *bop kibi* payments are made in part to avoid the implication that the debts may have motivated the act of sorcery that caused the death. The payments are redistributed in other *bop kibi* transactions to settle claims made against the deceased.<sup>7</sup>

Claims levied against the estate of the deceased may refer to specific exchanges, such as contributions to a bridewealth payment or gifts of pork. More commonly the claims refer in a general way to relationships with the deceased, such as having fed him, allowed him use rights of

---

<sup>6</sup>Bop refers to the rotting of a corpse or an infection. Kibi is also used in the context of dana kibi, which is the payment made by a father to his in-laws in exchange for the right to incorporate his children into his own clan.

<sup>7</sup>Bop kibi claims may also be demanded from the organizers of a burial if the body is interred before all the close relatives have arrived, or from a host who failed to protect his guests.

land for hunting, or provided him with a steady supply of tobacco. In these cases, there would have been no attempt to seek recompense had there not been a death. More than a bid for material compensation, the demand for goods or payment from relatives of the deceased is an attempt to compensate for the loss of the relationship. The recipients of these *bop kibi* payments are expected to return a portion of the transaction, usually up to half its value, at a later date. By recreating collapsed exchange relationships, *bop kibi* is said to "keep open the path (*kiman*)" of the relationship that the death threatened to close.

In certain cases, a relative has the right to demand *bop kibi* payments for the life of the deceased. A man who mistreats his wife, a son who neglected an elderly parent, a mother who failed to care for a child -- in any of these cases *bop kibi* may be sought. The claimants seek a replacement for the deceased, either the rights to another person (via adoption or marriage), a prestation that is the symbolic equivalent of a person, or the transfer of objects of value equivalent to bridewealth (*wonong konit*) or child price (*dana kibi*), according to the relationship.

In the event of the death of a married woman, the woman's natal clan may demand *bop kibi* payments from their affines. A brother who seeks compensation for the death of his married sister may be given a woman for someone in his clan to marry. Similarly, a man who demands compensation

for the death of his wife may be given another woman to marry. Another way to satisfy claims for compensation for the loss of a woman is by presenting an live adult cassowary to the claimants.<sup>8</sup> Payment of a cassowary is considered the equivalent of giving a woman. Another way to settle a claim for the life of a woman is to exchange pork and shell valuables; the latter can be used in future marriage transactions.

After the death of a child, the agnatic clan may blame the mother and demand a child from the mother's clan to adopt in place of the deceased. If the father is blamed for the death, his affines may demand payment of the child price (*dana kibi*) at the time of the burial.

These *bop kibi* transactions involve more than the exchange of material goods. The objects are the medium through which efforts to repair or replace the relationship are made. The feelings of loss associated with *mimyop* provide the dynamic for *bop kibi* transactions.

Another response to a loss caused by the death of a close relative is to seek to re-establish the relationship with the deceased. Like other relationships, this is often marked by the transfer of goods or valuables. Special powers or abilities are usually attributed to objects acquired by the living from the dead.

---

<sup>8</sup>These cassowaries are caught as chicks and raised to maturity in the village.

Before Nem's adoptive father Komyat died, he told Nem,

After I die and they bury me, you should sleep in the place in the house where my body was laid out. I'll come while you sleep.

The night after the burial, Nem slept where Komyat's body had been laid out. When he awoke in the morning, Komyat's severed thumb was on his chest. Nem carried the thumb with him for years. When he went hunting, all the animals were attracted to him. When he was in town and wanted to buy something, all he had to do was reach into his pocket and it would be full of money. Later Nem loaned the thumb to someone, but the man died and the thumb was lost.

Another response to a loss caused by death is the practice of amputating the first two digits of a woman's finger after the death of her husband or child.<sup>9</sup> The woman would pull her finger taut and cut between the carpals with a bamboo knife. After one death, the right or left index finger would be partially amputated; after a second death, the top of either middle finger would be severed. Only if the husband had taken good care of his wife would she cut her finger after his death. Schoorl (n.d.) suggests that it is thought that by severing her finger, the woman binds the spirit (*tawat* or *awat*) of the deceased to her. By sending twinges of pain through the stump of the finger, the spirit is said to be able to warn her of danger. The symbolic re-enactment of loss is thus also an attempt to re-establish the relationship with the deceased. The practice was halted about twenty-five years ago, in the mid-1960's.

---

<sup>9</sup>The standard interpretation for a dream about cutting one's hand, is the death of closely-related child or a pig or dog.

Sometimes feelings of *mimyop* are extended to the domain of inanimate objects.

One afternoon I heard a woman keening (*amenggamen*) in the style associated with mourning. She was not crying in response to a death, but about her canoe paddle. Later I found out that her paddle had been taken by some young boys who had carelessly allowed it to fall into the river. She was *mimyop* because of the loss of her paddle. Her keening had an instrumental function as well; as she was a widow without grown sons, she needed to coerce someone into making her a new paddle.

The internal dynamic of *mimyop* leads someone who has suffered a loss to seek recompense. This dynamic is based on the principle of reciprocity. There are a number of ways in which the Yonggom seek to resolve the feelings of loss that accompany death, including paying compensation that "keeps open" exchange relationships which would otherwise lapse, seeking compensation or a "replacement" for the deceased, attempting to re-establish contact with the deceased through the transfer of powerful objects, and re-enacting the loss by severing a finger and "binding" the spirit of the deceased to oneself.

#### **Vengeance Sorcery (*Bop mirim*) and Loss**

One of the most important forms of response to feelings of loss is the attempt to seek revenge for a death by using *bop mirim* vengeance or retribution sorcery. By using *bop mirim*, feelings of *mimyop* may be transformed into *kube*, the feeling associated with the reunion of close friends or relatives. After making *bop mirim* using the hair of the

deceased, the relatives wait for the sorcery to take effect. When the news of a death attributed to vengeance sorcery is reported, the relatives of the deceased feel *kube* in place of *mimyop*. In celebration of these feelings, the relatives of the deceased may sponsor an all-night dance performance.

### ***Une* (Fear)**

It is probably a human universal that confrontation with death raises questions about one's own mortality. But a death attributed to sorcery raises the issue more forcefully through the fear that the sorcerer may be poised to strike again. Welsch (1982) describes Ningerum assault sorcerers as "hiding killers," emphasizing the threat they pose to the living. After a death attributed to assault sorcery, people openly express their fear (*une*). Along with *mimyop*, these feelings of *une* are among the strongest emotional responses to sorcery.

*Une* is described as the response to circumstances in which one feels threatened or endangered. When asked to provide examples of situations in which they would feel *une*, people mention being in the rain forest during a windstorm<sup>10</sup>, when the sky is filled with closely-striking lightning known as *nambat*, or when one is having difficulty

---

<sup>10</sup>A windstorm at dawn is considered an omen (*bomot*) of an attack. A dream of a windstorm is interpreted the same way.

swimming across a rain-swollen river. Passing by a house abandoned by its owner, one might feel *une* about the possibility that the owner's *kinggen* or soul is still in the house.

Feelings of *une* can also come about when someone is startled or shocked (*binangge*), a condition that can result in the loss of the person's soul (*kinggen*).<sup>11</sup> A person whose spirit has left him may not be aware of this fact, but will lose weight and become lethargic. In the meantime, his *kinggen* may initiate trouble in the village. A *kinggen* may be responsible for loud noises, unexplained lights, or theft. A *kinggen* is visible from a distance as a shadowy form resembling a person.

#### ***Une (Fear) and Sorcery***

Precautions taken because of fear of a sorcery attack influence many aspects of everyday life. In processing sago, for example, feelings of *une* about a potential sorcery assault are prominent. Men usually fell sago palms and split open their hard outer bark, leaving the labor-intensive processing of the internal pith to women. A woman making sago alone in the swamps is considered particularly vulnerable to attack because the dense growth limits visibility and would camouflage the approach of a *kumka* or

---

<sup>11</sup>Binangge also means to pierce or prick the skin, for example by a sago thorn (om yik) or a splinter.

*kuman* assault sorcerer. Children accompanying women on sago-making trips are warned to play quietly so as not to attract a *kumka* or *kuman*, and not to wander off lest they be killed. Memories of childhood trips to process sago are often associated with feelings of *une*.

*Une*, along with *mimyop* (sorrow and loss), provide much of the motivational force behind the belief in sorcery. During a period of months in which there have been no serious illnesses or deaths in the community, people rarely talk about *kumka*, *kuman*, or *bom-mirim* sorcery. People move freely through the village and rain forest during most hours of the day and evening. Parents counsel their children to behave and be wary, but otherwise there are few daily references to sorcery.

After a death attributed to a *kumka* or *kuman* assault sorcerer, the possibility of another attack results in strong feelings of vulnerability and *une*. It is no longer considered safe to walk about alone. Men who leave their houses after dark will carry an axe, bow and arrows, or a machete; even when armed they hesitate before going out unaccompanied. Anyone walking alone at night may be considered to be acting suspiciously. Some families staying in the garden houses in the nearby rain forest may return to the village, while other families from the village will retreat to remote forest dwellings.

Une after a death makes sorcery a constant topic of conversation. The circumstances surrounding a death and suspicions about the identity of the *kumka* or *kuman* are repeatedly and animatedly discussed and debated. For weeks or months after a death, public attention is drawn to the continuing threat of sorcery every evening by men who walk through the village making public announcements. This type of speech or advice is known as *weng bop*, which literally means language or talk about death, but refers to advice or warnings about sorcery:

After his wife died, Nonggok regularly went around the village in the evening "giving advice" (*weng bop*). One night, this was his warning:

<i>Amnom ayoop ayoop:</i>	At night go two by two:
<i>awokdi minggi,</i>	father and son,
<i>ambang daman,</i>	elder and younger siblings,
<i>ambi amban.</i>	husband and wife.
<i>Dombore dombore ipban;</i>	Do not go around alone;
<i>kumka yanip.</i>	a sorcerer will kill you. <sup>12</sup>
<i>Amgot mi yewet konap.</i>	Do not hurt your friends.
<i>Nima beyarebep amop.</i>	Sneaking off with women is forbidden.
<i>Nenem kamaip amop.</i>	Having (illicit) sex is forbidden.
<i>Camp kiman, karup bet depkowiwen.</i>	They have barricaded the path to the refugee camp (i.e. do not go there).

---

<sup>12</sup>*Yanip* (*ye anip*) literally means "they will eat."

*Weng arewah dakmap ban;* Do not say bad words;  
*kumka yanip.* a sorcerer will kill you.

Another manifestation of feelings of une after a sorcery killing is the increase in the frequency of sightings of *kumka* or *kuman* assault sorcerers. These sightings may take place in the gardens or rain forest, beside a river or creek, or within the village itself. In general, any unexplained sounds or movements may be taken as evidence of the presence of a *kumka* or *kuman*. A sighting may consist of little more than a rustling noise beyond the observer's line of vision. A stranger travelling alone through the rain forest may be mistaken for a *kumka* or *kuman*, particularly if he does not respond to a call to identify himself. News of a *kumka* or *kuman* sighting spreads rapidly through the area, and one incident may inspire others:

One morning Dingari wanted to hunt beside a breadfruit trees where fruit bats had been feeding. Earlier that morning, however, a *kumka* had assaulted and tried to kill a young woman at Iogi Refugee Camp. Dingari felt afraid to go alone, so he told his son Kamawud to accompany him.

That afternoon Dingari and Kamawud returned to the village. Kamawud left the house briefly after dark and saw a figure moving in the shadows. He called out, "What are you? A man or a pig or..." but there was no response; Kamawud watched as the figure disappeared into the sago swamp.

There were many *kumka* and *kuman* sightings while I was living in Dome:

Pius, a young man living in Dome Refugee Camp, was walking back from Iogi village when his dog went charging into the undergrowth. Pius tried to follow his dog and was taken by surprise by a man whose entire body was covered with leaves. It was a *kumka*. Pius ran quickly back to the refugee camp and warned people to be careful.

Sightings typically involve very brief encounters:

Two young men from Dome Refugee Camp were walking along a trail on moonless night when one felt someone grab his arm. It was a *kumka*. The *kumka* tried to take the knife tucked into waistband of the young man's trousers, but the two men broke away and started running. When they turned and looked back, they saw two shadowy figures disappear in the direction of Awarakuk's house.<sup>13</sup>

After a sighting of a *kumka* or *kuman*, a group of men may look for physical evidence of the sorcerer's presence, such as broken twigs marking his path, or his footprints in the muddy ground.

Another source of concern, at least prior to the Pax Austalis and Pax Hollandic, was that the relatives of the deceased would launch a reprisal raid on someone they suspected of sorcery. The fear of reprisal encouraged relocation; either entire homesteads were abandoned or individuals who felt threatened would leave the area alone. Although usually short term, such displacements sometimes lasted years or a lifetime. The emigration of a person accused of sorcery was often treated as evidence of guilt, as it still is today, making it difficult for him to return. The frequency with which people moved in response to the

---

<sup>13</sup>Awarakuk was under suspicion for sorcery at the time.

threat of reprisal raids made the experience a relatively common one and many adults have childhood memories of being forced into flight:

Dako remembers how, when he was a young boy, his widowed mother roused him and his elder sister from sleep and filled a string bag with their belongings. She told her children that someone was coming to kill them, so they had to flee. She took her daughter's hand, picked up Dako, and began walking through the dark rain forest.

It began to rain and Dako was cold and frightened. He started to cry. When his mother tried to quiet him, he began crying even louder. Finally she threatened to leave him behind, but her threat made him hysterical. When they reached a creek bridged by a tree, Dako's mother put him down and crossed to the other side with her daughter. Dako told me that his mother intended to leave him behind, but his sister disobeyed her and ran back for him.

Reprisal raids were often carried out using deception. The raiding party entered the house of the intended victim in the guise of a visit. Once inside the house, they would seize everyone inside, with several men holding down the intended victim. In stories about such raids, the intended victim calls out to his family just before being struck a death blow with a stone club, warning them, *Une doberime!* "You must live in fear!"<sup>14</sup>

*Une* about sorcery also influences other behavior. For example, there are techniques to counteract theft that work like *mirim* and cause the thief to become ill. The footprints (*yon*) of a thief can be used to make *yon mirim* to cause him illness, or a banana stem (*yum kap*) can be used

---

<sup>14</sup>The verb doberime is third person plural imperative.

to make *yum mirim* in retribution against someone who stole bananas. The fear of retribution sorcery is mentioned as a factor in inhibiting theft:

Young unmarried men in Dome were stealing chickens from the villagers and refugees. When confronted about the missing chickens, they laughed off the charges. When Kurim scolded the young men, telling them that thieves live short lives because of sorcery, their response was to tell Kurim not to threaten them, or they would beat him up.

In response to this incident, Dako told me that in the past there was little theft because of the *une* of retribution sorcery. When I asked Dako whether he had ever stolen anything during his youth, he admitted only to stealing chickens from an expatriate missionary, as the mission worker was powerless to harm him. Dako said that the young men stealing chickens were ignorant of the powers of *mirim* and would die young as a result.

*Une* of the sorcerer also provides motivation for carrying out *bop mirim* retribution sorcery and *awon monbe* sorcery divinations. Death is taken as prima facie evidence that sorcery has taken place and affirms the threatening presence of a nearby sorcerer. Fear of the "hiding killer" motivates the Yonggom to carry out *awon monbe* divinations to shame the sorcerer into giving up sorcery. It also motivates the use of *bop mirim* retribution sorcery.

### **Nurin (Anger)**

The Yonggom describe *nurin* (anger) as emerging from a confrontation. A common cause of such confrontations is the perception that reciprocal obligations have not been met. *Nurin* is considered a dangerous emotion.

Whereas feelings of *mimyop* (sorrow and loss) and *une* (fear) are stated directly, feelings of *nurin* are typically expressed by way of threats of physical confrontation. Thus, someone will say, "I am going to hit him" (*ne ayan damin*) instead of "I am angry with him," or "he is going to fight with him," instead of "he is angry with him." In referring to a confrontation in which angry words (*nurin weng*) were spoken, people will say that the two parties were "going to fight." These threats of violence, however, are only rarely carried out:

Kibinok sent Koworot to Kiunga with a message for his new son-in-law (*wononggim*). Kibinok wanted the son-in-law to buy tobacco for use in a prestation for his son's engagement.<sup>15</sup> The son-in-law refused the request, accusing Kibinok of trying to use up (*ane*, eat up) his money before he could pay off his bridewealth.

When Kibinok heard that his son-in-law had turned down his request, he stood up and began to shout,

It is a good thing that he [the son-in-law] is in Kiunga. If he was as close by as Iogi village, then I would be squeezing his nose already.

A week later, when Kibinok's daughter came to visit her mother, the son-in-law accompanied her, but he and Kibinok did not quarrel or fight.

Angry words (*nurin weng*) are generally "fighting words."

Another way in which *nurin* is expressed is in a harangue, which is usually referred to as *gurung weng*. The

---

<sup>15</sup>Aup kowip, the term for the gift associated with the engagement, literally means "they take tobacco." The engagement ceremony usually includes exchanges of tobacco, food, and valuables between the two lineages. More recently, currency and store-bought goods have taken the place of valuables.

subject of the harangue may be present or absent. Both men and women carry out harangues.

Kibinok was trying to build the first house in the village to have a metal roof. One morning he called his *mom* (classificatory sister's son) Koworot over and told him,

Since you are working (for wages) in Kiunga, you must buy me the tools I need to build my iron-roofed house. I need a saw, a ruler, and a t-square.

Koworot answered him,

If you are trying to build an iron-roofed house, then you must get the things yourself. If you are unable to do this (*ep ku yimen ban*), then don't build an iron-roofed house.

After speaking, Koworot went away. That afternoon Kibinok sat on the ramp leading up to his house, talking in a loud and angry voice for forty minutes. Although Koworot was not within earshot, Kibinok called out to him,

When you were a small boy, I took care of you. Now you have grown up and have a family...

You don't know how to work hard. You don't know how to cut trees to make a garden, to build a house, or to make arrows. You don't know how to work hard, so you went to Kiunga to get a job.

Kibinok pounded the ground with a long stick and continued,

I am building a house with an iron roof. I looked after you when you were a small boy, so now you must help me with the things I need. As long as I am alive, you must bring me what I ask for.

The subject of a harangue usually endures the speech without attempting to defend himself or justify his actions.

Katambu was in his late teens and largely uninterested in sexual relationships. His father Nonggok, however, used to publicly berate him, threatening to shoot him with his bow and arrows should he become involved with any of the girls in the village.

Katambu's response to his father's verbal outbursts was to hang his head and stare at the ground. He knew that any response to his father would possibly invite a violent reaction.

Sometimes *nurin* emerges as the subject of dream interpretations. A dream about splitting open the tough outer husk of an okari nut (*Terminalus sp.*) is that someone is angry with the dreamer. The interpretation of a dream in which people are fishing using derris root poison, which turns the water black, is that people are angry with the dreamer. A dream about feces is also about anger. These dream interpretations suggest the hard, toxic, and foul qualities of anger.

The Yonggom describe *nurin* as emerging from a confrontation, rather than being experienced internally (like *mimyop*) or felt on the skin (cf: Strathern [1975] on shame). The Yonggom explain that a man may feel no anger or animosity towards someone with whom he has a dispute, but when he approaches that person, he may speak harshly to him (*gurung weng*) and the words may incite angry feelings (*nurin*).

#### ***Nurin* (Anger), Property, and Exchange**

The Yonggom have strong expectations about what others should provide them. Relationships allow people to make certain types of demands upon one another, and strong emotions are aroused by both the fulfillment and the denial

of such claims. *Nurin* is one possible response to someone's refusal to acknowledge one's claims.

The expression *neman neman*<sup>16</sup> means "what is mine is mine" and is used to express a claim. The term is also used for violations of property rights, as when someone harvests fruit from another's tree without permission, or when a pig eats from one's garden. *Neman neman* also refers to compensation, retribution, reprisal, and vengeance:

One of the pigs in the village had a reputation for rooting through gardens for root crops. A number of villagers complained to the owner, but he refused to keep the animal caged or take it to be raised in a garden house. One afternoon Dako saw the pig digging in his garden and shot it dead. When the owner found out his pig had been killed, there was a great stir in the village, and the owner demanded compensation from Dako.

A crowd gathered around the dead pig and began to assess its value. A figure was agreed upon, of which about half was to be paid immediately. Many of Dako's relatives and close friends contributed to the compensation payment and in return indicated which portion of the pig they expected to receive (e.g. head, leg, etc.).

The term *neman neman* is applicable to each of the claims that were made: Dako's right to kill the pig in response to the damage to his garden, the owner's demand for payment for the pig, and Dako's relatives' rights to claim a portion of the meat in return for helping him settle his debt.

*Yimen* refers to satisfaction, capability, and the acceptance of responsibility. Some of the uses of the expression include: "I have had enough to eat," "I am

---

<sup>16</sup>Neman is the first person possessive.

strong enough to carry this log," "I can paddle a canoe," and "I will settle the debt." Ideally a person should not only be easily satisfied, capable, and responsible, but he should also be generous and giving (*dowagen*). A man who is *dowagen* will always share what he has.

The opposite of *dowagen* is *girim*; a person who does not share is *girim*. A successful hunter who kills many pigs but does not distribute the meat, will acquire such a reputation. To eat greedily, taking more than one's share, is *girim ana*. Someone who is *girim* causes others to feel *wunggande* or resentful.<sup>17</sup>

Someone may also feel *wunggande* or resentful if someone makes use of his belongings without first acquiring permission. If someone loses a borrowed object, he will not go to the owner's house or greet the owner until he is able to replace what he lost, as otherwise the owner would feel *wunggande*. Feelings of *wunggande* are commonly cited as motivation for sorcery, e.g. "he was always being greedy, so they became resentful and killed him." *Wunggande* is cited as the reason food is not eaten while others are looking on, whether this means closing the door to one's house during a meal or taking food away from a public feast to be consumed privately. At the conclusion of a "call and response" song ceremony for a new house (*ambip dande*), the owner dances to

---

<sup>17</sup>Although the verb is *wunggu*, I usually heard the verb used in its intensified form, with *waande*, to cut or experience sharply, as *wunggande*.

ward off feelings of *wunggande* stimulated by the new building.

*Menenggun* refers to a habit of asking for things belonging to others. It is difficult to turn down a direct request from another person, although someone who has a reputation as a demanding person is derogatorily referred to as *menenggun karup*. A translation of the biblical commandment "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's property," written on the wall of a church in Atkamba, used the verb *menengge*. A generous man (*dowagen karup*) is said to be willing to give a *menenggun karup* at least part of what he asks for, but others may angrily turn him away.

One of the characteristics of many exchange obligations is that they are defined in ambiguous terms. It is difficult for the two parties to reach agreement on what is owed. Furthermore, it is not usually possible to satisfy all of one's exchange obligations, particularly those stemming from bridewealth (*wonong konit*) and child price (*dana kibi*). When the demands made on a person exceed his resources, he must decide which debts to settle and which creditors to keep at bay. Welsch (n.d.b) describes the same dilemma among the neighboring Ningerum as "robbing Peter to pay Paul." The process guarantees social tensions that cannot be resolved.

These tensions contribute to one of the main dynamics of Yonggom social relations. Exchange has a greater

significance than simply the value of the material objects themselves. Yonggom exchange has an "evaluative" aspect; transactions allow one to evaluate the relationship between participants in the exchange. Unrequited reciprocity causes one to feel slighted, resentful, and angry. This is more profoundly disruptive to the self than the sociological construct of "losing face" would suggest. Not only is one's social position challenged, but also one's essential humanity. The process is dramatized in myths like that of children who became flying foxes: unrequited reciprocity is dehumanizing.

This "evaluative" aspect of exchange is particularly evident in cases in which people assert claims to property for which they have little need:

Kibinok and Kurim are *ambang-daman* (classificatory elder-younger brothers) both in their late middle age. Kibinok's life has been very productive; he has two wives, many grown children with their own households, a house full of relatives and children, and strong ties to many people whom he has helped over the years. He is a good hunter and is able to provide for many people. He is outspoken and well-respected.

In contrast, Kurim and his wife have no children and live alone in a ramshackle and empty house next to Kibinok's. Kurim and his wife are often short of food, especially meat. In comparison with Kibinok, Kurim has very little.

Yet when Kurim brought home a pandanus fruit one evening and prepared the delicacy for himself and his wife without offering any to Kibinok, it sent Kibinok raging with *nurin*.

Claims may be asserted to the point of taking food from another's mouth:

One afternoon Buka killed a bird with a stone from his slingshot. He had prepared the bird to eat when his aunt (*nimba*, FaBrWi) called out to him, claiming the bird for herself.

There are several ways of responding to perceived violations of exchange obligations or property rights. *Kabandi* is a form of advice or warning; while evoked by many of the same events as *nurin*, it is not associated with the threat of physical violence. *Od kenep* refers to an unwanted attempt by others to involve one in an exchange relationship, usually by making demands on one; *od kenep* also involves the rejection of such a proposed relationship or the disentangling of oneself from an existing relationship. *Od kenep* was once described to me as a "lazy" form of anger, because rather than objecting to an undesirable situation, one simply opts not to be involved:

At an impromptu discussion about community members who had not yet paid the school fees for their children, Joana mentioned Johannis' name. Johannis immediately stood up and rebuked her, saying (in response to great mirth) that the three children in his house were his wife's from another marriage and not his own, and that his only child was still at home nursing (i.e. not in school yet), so that he was not responsible for paying school fees.

In rejecting his obligations to his wife's children, Johannis was displaying *od kenep*.

#### **Sorcery and Nurin (Anger)**

The tension that accompanies exchange transactions is increased by the fear of sorcery. Sorcerers typically prey on situations that involve inequality. As a result, the Yonggom are vigilant in maintaining relative equality.

Imbalance threatens to bring about anger and resentment as well as violent retribution using sorcery.

One night in the village there was a boisterous discussion in Kutem's house about the refugees' use of land and resources. Many villagers complained how the refugees were taking produce from their gardens, depleting all the nearby sago stands, and eliminating all the small game within several hours walk. The villagers wanted to limit the refugees' exploitation of these resources, but at the same time were frightened that any restrictions they attempted to apply would make the refugees angry and provoke them into killing the villagers with sorcery. The discussion continued late into the night, but no solution to the problem could be found.

Many sorcery accusations refer to outbursts of *nurin*. This story was told at an at *kawenepinbon* mortuary inquest:

Talking about the death of his sister, Eweyok's wife, Nem suggested that Nandun might be to blame:

Nandun came to my house and said he wanted to fight with Eweyok because of three people: Beman, Kinong, and Maweng. Eweyok used to ask these three to buy him small things, like soap or salt, and they would give them to him.

But these three people wouldn't help Nandun, even though he looked after them when they were small and gave them meat to eat.

That is what Nandun told me. So, it might be Nandun who told someone (*kewot*) to kill Eweyok's wife. It might be him. Whether it is true or not, I don't know.

Nandun was *nurin* because the young men with whom he had established a relationship were now ignoring him. He was angry with Eweyok, who had curried the favor of the three men. Nem hypothesized that Nandun's *nurin* toward Eweyok led him to pay someone to kill Eweyok's wife.

Even the use of *gurung weng*, the type of speech used in a harangue, may later result in a sorcery accusation:

Buka and Nolan, two young men in the village, had been losing weight and feeling lethargic, so Buka's ena (MoSi) decided to hold a *kibirat* ceremony. During the dancing and discussion of the case, several people accused the widow Kambap of making *mirim* that caused the two boys to become ill.

They suspected Kambap because she often used *gurung weng* against the boys, scolding them for playing like children instead of working like men. Kambap denied that she made *mirim* and the boys gradually recovered.

In the effort to avoid potential sorcery accusations, people may publicly deny that they are *nurin*:

After a fatal canoe accident along the Fly River, a public meeting was held in Kiunga to assess responsibility for the deaths and to determine the amount of the *bop kibi* mortuary payment the canoe owner should pay.

During the meeting, the brother of one man killed in the accident called out to reassure the members of the canoe owner's clan:

Don't think that I am *nurin*; I just want to hear how the accident happened. Anybody who loses a brother or sister will feel *mimyop*, but don't think that I am *nurin* with you.

### ***Biraande*: An Ethos of Trickery and Deceit**

Thirty years ago, Schoorl (n.d.) described Yonggom society as being dominated by suspicion, fear, and mistrust. These sentiments are still prominent today, reflecting what I would suggest is an ethos of trickery and deceit.

Trickery and deceit are an important accompaniment to everyday life among the Yonggom. The verb *biraande* means to trick, fool, or deceive. A man known for habits of deceit

may be referred to as a *biraande karup* or trickster.<sup>18</sup> A translation of the biblical commandment "Thou shalt not lie," written on the wall of a church in Atkamba village, used the verb *biraande*.

On a daily basis, *biraande* is practiced in order to limit information about people's activities. It is undesirable for information about one's activities to become public, as this increases vulnerability to assault sorcery. As a consequence, the Yonggom typically respond to questions about their plans by giving misleading answers. Questioning other people about their activities may be regarded with suspicions, as may be the spreading of gossip.

*Biraande* can also have a humorous dimension. One common, playful form of deception is speech known as *yen kande*, in which the meaning of a statement has been somehow reversed. *Yen kande* is meant to be funny:

Wun was planning to walk to Kiunga the next day. Dagop wanted to trick him (*ye yen kandan daman*), so he approached him in front of a number of other people and told him, "I am going to Kiunga tomorrow."

Wun was surprised and said, "Oh, I am going, too. Maybe we can go together."

Everyone laughed and Wun realized that Dagop had reversed the facts of the situation, saying "I am going" rather than "you are going."

There are two other contexts in which the expression *yen kande* is also used. *Yen kande* can refer to two men

---

<sup>18</sup>A cognate term for *biraande* is *irare* or *irarone*, and has the same meaning.

shouldering either end off a housepost too heavy to be carried by one man. Another meaning of *yen kande* is to share something between two people by dividing it in half. The type of speech known as *yen kande* involves turning a statement around so that it is believable even though it is no longer true.

There is also a genre of folk tales that revolves around trickery and deceit. One character in these tales is *Komot*, also known as *We*, a primal man and trickster figure. Another character is *Wuk*, a primal woman and creator figure. The other characters in these stories are the *Yoknat*, *Komot's* nephews (classificatory sister's sons, *mom*).<sup>19</sup> The *Yoknat* are described as small, elf-like people; they lack names or other individual characteristics. A few *Yoknat* are thought to be still alive; sightings are occasionally reported from a place called *Inggurut Anggo* on the Fly River.

There are numerous stories about *Komot* tricking the *Yoknat* into gruesome deaths. In each case, the *Yoknat* wish to emulate certain achievements or attributes of their Uncle *Komot*, but reject his explanations of them. Exasperated by his nephews' persistent refusal to accept his explanations, *Komot* concocts preposterous schemes that result in *Yoknat* deaths.

---

<sup>19</sup>Also the cognate *Iriyoknat*.

The stories have two themes. One set of stories is about Komot's accomplishments, such as obtaining cassowary eggs or making canoes. When the Yoknat ask their uncle how to find cassowary eggs, they discount his explanation. Finally, Komot tells a Yoknat to put on an armband and bury himself in the mud along a trail frequented by cassowaries. Komot tells the Yoknat to wait for a female cassowary to pass by and to thrust his arm into its cloaca and take the eggs. When the Yoknat attempts to follow these instructions, his arm becomes wedged firmly inside the cassowary, which drags him through the rain forest and sago swamps for several days. Finally Komot is forced to shoot the cassowary with an arrow, killing the Yoknat in the process.

The second group of stories is concerned with the changes Komot undergoes as he ages, such as losing his hair, suffering from hemorrhoids, and losing his teeth. When the Yoknat want to know why Komot has hemorrhoids, he tells a Yoknat to jump from a tree onto a sharpened stick. When the Yoknat want to know why Komot has lost his teeth, Komot instructs a Yoknat to stand and grit his teeth while the other Yoknat hurl rocks at his mouth. In each case, Komot's schemes result in Yoknat deaths.

These stories are considered entertaining by everyone, not only because of their slapstick character, but also because they are stories of deceit. The stories of Komot

and the Yoknat should not, however, be dismissed simply as amusement; the same characters also play important roles in more significant myths. Myths about Komot and Wuk account for important inventions of material culture and technology, as well as in the origin of features of the human body and local topography. Fragments from Komot-Yoknat stories, including the cassowary egg story above, are incorporated into magic formula known as *waruk* (see Chapter Eight). During the telling of the mythic charter of *yawat* cult ritual (see Chapter Ten), the main characters of the myth are sometimes referred to as Komot and Wuk. Another cult myth asserts that the secret sound-producing instruments of the *yawat* cult were originally used by Wuk before being taken by Komot for use by men in *yawat*. In a recent innovation, there is a myth about Komot's son Digore, who shed his skin like a prawn and went away, promising to return; he is likened to Jesus.

Myths about a hero and trickster figure like Komot have a regional distribution among the people of the North Fly-Digul plateau. Among the Awin or Aekyom, he is known by the name *Wi* (Depew 1983:42-43), a cognate of the Yonggom *We*. The tradition extends to the north among the Ningerum, and west to the Mandobo in Irian Jaya (Boelaars 1969). This complex of myths appears to be independent of the two other regional traditions of myth in the Fly River region, the Souw hero tales of the Middle Fly and south coast, described

by Wagner (1967; cf: Busse 1987), and the Afek myths of the related Mt. Ok-speaking Min peoples described by Brumbaugh (1991) and others.

Deceit and trickery (*biraande*) also have a more sinister side. As discussed above, reprisal raids were usually carried out in the deceptive guise of a friendly visit. The threat of such raids casts a shadows on the rites of hospitality: a host shares food with his guests, who may nonetheless be poised to strike and kill him. The threat of deceit is emphasized by the words attributed to the dying victim, "*Une doberime!*" -- "You must live in fear!"

The Yonggom ethos of deceit and trickery is epitomized by sorcery. Sorcery illustrates the treacherous deceit that is considered the hidden potential of all Yonggom. Sorcery also dictates the necessity to live a cautious and wary life.

**Sorcery and Deceit**

Belief in sorcery depends on the assumption that people are capable of murderous deceit. Anger and resentment are seen to motivate acts of sorcery, but even someone without such feelings may be persuaded (*kewot*) to carry out a sorcery killing. Two conclusions that the Yonggom infer from the existence of sorcery are the impossibility of ever knowing another's intentions and the inadvisability of trusting others completely; anyone is capable of deceit. Given the assumption that deaths are willfully and maliciously caused, the Yonggom consider deceit to be a major facet of human character. Bercovitch (1989:146) has argued that to the Nalumin, a witch is not the "invisible embodiment of what is alien or other... [but] everything that people truly are." Similarly, to the Yonggom, sorcery reveals the truth about people.

Since sorcery is an interpretation of illness and death, it becomes a force in the construction of Yonggom ideas about character and emotion. It is through their experience of sorcery that the Yonggom conclude that people are inherently capable of deceit.

**Karak (Shame)**

*Karak* (shame) is described by the Yonggom as the feeling a person has when he or she has done something wrong and it becomes the subject of public scrutiny. If knowledge

of an adulterous affair becomes public, the participants in the affair feel *karak*. Normally people try to avoid attention after doing something wrong by concealing the act or by physically hiding from public view. I did not encounter references to private feelings of guilt; people say they feel *karak* only after their actions become known. The intensified form of *karak* is *karak bopman*, "to die from shame," like the expression of intensified hunger, *wunggi bopman* "starving to death."

People feel *karak* if someone is angry with them or resentful of them. The subjects of gossip feel *karak*. A person who is sick or has had a near-fatal accident, such as almost drowning, will feel *karak* when this becomes public knowledge. If people comment negatively about another person's body, referring to a skin condition or a handicap, the person feels *karak*. People also feel *karak* when others challenge their competence or fitness.

Someone who makes too large a request may later feel *karak*. Potential feelings of *karak* thus guide exchange relations. In this sense, *karak* is complementary to feelings of resentment (*wunggandi*):

If someone goes to collect an entire pig at an *arat* pig feast, he might feel *karak* at receiving all of the meat himself, so he will invite someone to go with him. At the same time, if people see him collecting a whole pig himself, they might feel resentment (*wunggandi*) towards him and use sorcery to kill him.

Concern about *karak* thus protects one against feelings of resentment, which motivate acts of sorcery. Within one's own clan, however, one never needs to feel *karak* when asking for something. Close friends ask freely for things from each other without ever feeling *karak*. Refusing a legitimate and reasonable request can also cause one to feel *karak*.

*Karak* has another meaning as well, which is a physical analogue to the feeling. This meaning of *karak* is any sound or sensation that makes a chill run up and down one's spine, as with us when someone scratches his fingernails or a piece of chalk across a blackboard. For the Yonggom, the equivalent physical sensation is touching wood when one's hand is covered with sago meal, or stepping on stones after walking across sand. Feeling *karak* is said to resemble this physical sensation.

Someone who has little concern for the effects of his behavior on others is said to have no *karak*, as for example, someone who publicly flaunts his adulterous behavior. Greedy and demanding persons also have no *karak*, and they make others feel *karak*:

Awarakuk, an eccentric bachelor in his thirties and a refugee from Irian Jaya, approached me with a request. He explained how he had been accustomed to eating rice and canned fish in Irian Jaya, but now that he was living in the refugee camp, all he had to eat was sago and bananas. As these are dry and coarse foods, this diet made his throat very sore. To remedy the situation, he told me to give him a 20 Kg sack of rice and a case of canned fish.

When I told this story to other people in the village, their responses were the same: *Karak!* they exclaimed.

Changing norms about modesty have caused young people to feel *karak* about traditional attire. At one ceremony, when several young women were discouraged from wearing blouses, they drew brassieres over their breasts with the red clay they were using to decorate themselves. When dancing, young men hesitate to wear penis sheaths, and if they do, they usually wear a pair of shorts or undershorts underneath. The older men insist *ku kastom karak ipban* "this is customary, there is no *karak*," but are unable to persuade the younger people.

Anthropologists working in Melanesia have focused on the use of shaming as a social sanction against behavior considered inappropriate (Epstein 1983). Young (1971), focusing on social control, described competitive food exchanges and angry harangues of Goodenough Islanders as attempts to shame. Strathern (1975) noted that *Melpa pipil*, which he translates as shame, is considered to be "on the skin," which is the physical boundary of the individual, illustrating how shame mediates between public concerns and personal experience. In reviewing the concept of shame in Melanesia, Epstein suggests that shame is defined in relation to a society's ethos and values:

So, in the dynamic and highly individualistic world of New Guinea, where a man is encouraged to be combative and self-assertive, shame is clearly coupled with pride. By contrast, in more static societies, where there is more concern with matters of personal status,

shame is more appropriately paired with the concept of honour (1983:49).

Schieffelin (1983:188) has shown how shaming among the Kaluli is a tactic for countering assertions and appeals, and is generally phrased as a rhetorical challenge that undermines the legitimacy of such claims. Shame among the Kaluli gains its "significance, sense of proportion, and social implications... from the... process of reciprocity" (*ibid*:190).

Among the Yonggom, the angry speech of harangues known as *gurung weng* is intended to cause *karak* by publicly calling attention to the perceived failure to reciprocate. Shaming is also the only non-violent strategy considered effective against the sorcerer. Public discussion about the identity of the sorcerer, as well as sorcery inquests and divinations, are intended to shame the sorcerer by calling attention to his antisocial acts.

#### **Karak (Shame) and the Sorcerer**

Public references to the sorcerer's complicity in act of sorcery are said to make the sorcerer feel *karak*:

Suppose you make *bom* or *mirim* or arrange *kewot* for someone to be killed and then people mention you in reference to the sorcery. You will feel *karak bopman* (literally "die from shame").

It is the feeling of *karak* that is said to influence the sorcerer to stop the sorcery process by removing the sorcery packet or substance from its hidden location, allowing the

victim to recover. Karak may also dissuade a sorcerer from killing again.

Karak is given as the *raison d'être* for *kibirat* inquests and *awon monbe* pig-killing divinations; these rituals provide a forum for addressing the sorcerer and making him feel *karak*:

Nonggok held a *kibirat* for his wife when she was sick. They have five young children and no daughters old enough to take over his wife's work should she die. At one point during the *kibirat*, he tried to make the sorcerer feel *karak* by referring to the future of the children should their mother die, asking, "If my wife dies, are you going to help me look after my children?"

Gabriel explained the force of these rituals in halting sorcery by comparing sorcery killings to a fire that continues to burn after it appears to have been put out:

The fire underneath is still burning, even though you put it out on top. It is like all this killing: if you do not talk about it publicly, then the fire is still burning. If you talk about it, the killer will feel *karak* and then these things will not continue to happen.

The shaming of the sorcerer also explains why sorcery proceedings are considered efficacious even though they do not identify the sorcerer. Public discussions of suspicions about the identity of the sorcerer are intended to shame the sorcerer into forsaking sorcery. As the ultimate antisocial act, sorcery estranges the sorcerer from society. An attempt to shame the sorcerer is also an invitation for him to return to sociality by acknowledging the social pressure to reform.

***Inamen* (Thought and Intention)**

*Inamen* might be glossed as "thought," "common sense," or even "idea," although it also means "intention," the determination to act in a certain way. Good intentions (*inamen amun*) are sometimes defined in terms of reciprocity, such as settling a debt. Successfully carrying out a complicated task also demonstrates that one has *inamen amun*. A person with "good intentions" will not take things which do not belong to him or her, will not sleep with another's spouse, and in general will not behave in a manner that will cause conflict. *Inamen amun* is sometimes translated by English-speaking Yunggom as "good thinking" or "good plan."

The contrasting term for *inamen amun* is not *inamen arewah* or "bad intentions," but *inamen ipban*, "lacking intentions." A person described as *inamen ipban* is said to act without thinking of the consequences. The expression is similar to the English "not using common sense" or "not thinking." *Inamen ipban* also carries implications of ignoring "social" common sense, in particular exchange obligations or expectations of reciprocity.

Small children, animals, and insane persons (*warutki karup*) are not considered to possess *inamen*. There is no point at which children are suddenly deemed to have *inamen*; rather, as they mature they gradually become capable of judgements which reflect an increasing amount of *inamen*. *Inamen* is not considered a developmental capability, but

something acquired through the process of socialization.<sup>20</sup> While *inamen* bears some resemblance to our notion of "reason," it is primarily a social concept, defined largely in terms of reciprocity. Also, *inamen* does not refer to abstract reasoning, but the recognition of social connectedness and obligations.<sup>21</sup>

The Yonggom do not consider themselves privy to the *inamen* of others except as it is manifested in particular actions. In general the Yonggom refuse to speculate on another's *inamen*; the response to a question about a person's *inamen* is likely to be, "I don't know his *inamen*." That *inamen* remains concealed is an integral part of the ethos of deceit. The phrase used to describe the behavior of someone who commits assault sorcery is *inamen amonom be kumka*, to "intentionally become a *kumka*."

#### Continuity in Behavior

The Yonggom describe the behavior of others as if it demonstrates continuity. Most assessments or judgments of a person's behavior are spoken of in one of three ways: in terms of the person's reputation, or his habits, or his disposition.

---

<sup>20</sup>See B. Schieffelin (1990) on Kaluli language socialization and the inculcation of the values of reciprocity.

<sup>21</sup>Compare the Utku notion of *ihuma* (Briggs 1970).

The first construction refers to what is public knowledge about a person, his reputation. A person known for giving to others and sharing acquires a reputation for generosity (*dowagen*) and is known as a *dowagen karup*, a generous person. A person who is known for demanding things from others acquires a reputation as a *menenggun karup*, a demanding person.

The second form in which judgments about behavior are made uses the suffix *-awan*, which implies a habitual pattern of activity. A person who is *wengawan* is a talkative person (*weng* is talk or language). A person who is *nurinawan* has a bad temper (*nurin* is anger).

The third way to describe a person's behavior is with the suffix *-mo*, which turns a noun into an adjective. The suffix *-mo* is used for color terms as well as descriptions of persons. Red clay is *dot*; the color red and objects colored red are referred to as *dotmo*. Charcoal is *bin*; the color black and black objects are *binmo*. For persons, a noun describing behavior plus the suffix *-mo* forms a term that implies a disposition to that behavior. Thus, as *girim* means "greed," *girimo* refers to a greedy disposition.

With regard to sorcery, there are two means of assessing someone's behavior as to whether he is likely to be a sorcerer. As with anyone, a person may be judged on the basis of his reputations, or habits, or disposition.

But a person may also be suspected of sorcery when he behaves in a manner that is considered out of character. In a public discussion of sorcery, Uran emphasized this point:

Kibinok and Kawirok, for example, do not commit adultery or take things from others; they are good people. If suddenly one of them goes and takes a woman [commits adultery] or steals something, then he is making a sign. Afterwards, people should discuss the problem. Someone may have ordered him (*kewot*) to kill someone and he is making a sign. If someone always behaves improperly, we won't pay special attention to him when he does something wrong.

#### **Conclusions: Yonggom Sorcery and Emotions**

If the Yonggom assert that they cannot know the *inamen* of others, on what basis do they formulate sorcery accusations? In constructing plausible scenarios to account for sorcery, they are forced to speculate or make guesses about the *inamen* of others. In creating these propositions or hypotheses, the Yonggom make inferences about emotions, character, and motivation. These inferences also draw on the logic of reciprocity, as well as the "evaluative" aspect of exchange and the significance of unrequited reciprocity.

It is through their experience with sorcery that the Yonggom base their assumptions that people are capable of deceit. Sorcery provides the evidence that someone will kill a close associate because of a petty grievance or accept a bribe to kill a stranger. In the construction of scenarios accounting for cases of sorcery, these things are common and necessary inferences.

Such inferences influence the Yonggom view of character and motivation and shapes the emotional contours of their lives. Feelings of sorrow and loss associated with a death may only be addressed through sorcery proceedings. Sorcery defines the consequences of anger and resentment. Normal fears become greatly amplified after a death attributed to sorcery. The Yonggom ethos of trickery and deceit is dramatized in scenarios constructed to explain sorcery killings. Shame plays a role in everyday interaction and is the only non-violent means of influencing a sorcerer.

During sorcery proceedings, the Yonggom make inferences about other persons in order to develop hypotheses and propositions about their responsibility for illness and death. Through these inferences, the Yonggom also draw conclusions about the meaning and significance of their emotions.

## Chapter Six: Natural Images

A flowering sago palm is a powerful natural image, evoking feelings of *mimyop* (sorrow and loss) associated with senescence and death. Sago palm trees (*om*) only flower once, usually after twelve to fifteen years of growth. The trees should be harvested before they flower, for the efflorescence consumes the bulk of a tree's edible starch. A flowering sago palm, because its starch has gone to waste, evokes the observer's memories of those who once prepared sago for him as a child, but are now either deceased or too old to process sago.

-- field notes

### In the Rain Forest

When I travelled by canoe along the Ok Tedi River, the other passengers would teach me the names of the birds we saw on our journey. The tiny blue bird perched at the edge of the river was *on diin* (a kingfisher), the noisy red and green birds flying across the river were *on arek* and *on munggut* (eclectus parrots), and the large, ungainly black birds in the canopy were *on kevet* (hornbills).<sup>1</sup> That the birds were important to the Yonggom was not a surprise, since I was familiar with the work of Feld (1982) who has described how birds and bird calls are important sources of metaphor among the Kaluli.

Because birds are the most colorful and vocal of the animals in the forest, they dramatically illustrate a broader pattern in which images from nature provide vehicles for Yonggom thoughts and emotions. Like Wagner (1972), I

---

<sup>1</sup>For the identification of Yonggom bird species, see Appendix Two.

view metaphors drawn from natural images as examples of the creative process of establishing meaning. This is vividly expressed in Yonggom interpretations of natural omens and dreams, in their myths about animals and men, in their patterns of distinguishing persons and groups, in the relationship between language and the objects they produce, and in categories of sensory experience.

### **A Forest of Living Symbols**

Away from the rivers, beneath the dense rain forest canopy, it is often sound rather than sight that alerts one to the presence of birds.<sup>2</sup> The Yonggom are adept at recognizing many bird species by their calls, such as the startling, ear-piercing cry of the *on kawa*, the sulphur-crested cockatoo, or the nasal honking of *ono*, the greater bird of paradise (*ono*).

Attention to these bird calls sometimes provides the Yonggom with practical information that can be used, for example, to enhance success in hunting. A hunter in the rain forest will follow the call of *on mangganok* (noisy friarbird) in the hope that it will lead him to a wild pig. A crowd of birds calling noisily may betray a monitor lizard clinging to the hidden side of a tree trunk.

---

<sup>2</sup>On the significance of sound in the rain forest, see Feld (1982).

Bird calls also mark the passage of time. The call of *on kuni*, the hooded butcherbird, marks the rising of the sun. *On dokdok*, large-tailed nightjar, dives for swarming insects each evening at dusk. Through their feeding patterns, birds mark seasonal changes according to the ripening of the fruits they eat. Breeding seasons and molting periods of birds are also noted by the Yonggom as markers of time. Birds can mark sacred time as well; during *yawat* cult ceremonies, birds are said to stop singing altogether. The regular migration of certain birds also mark the passage of time. Unusual ecological conditions may also be marked by avian activity, as when an Australian Pelican flew up the Ok Tedi River, well beyond its normal range, during the 1980 drought in Western Province.

The Yonggom are skilled at imitating bird calls. They use this ability when waiting behind hunting blinds for birds to come within range of their arrows. Bird calls may also be imitated when approaching a garden house in order to alert the owner of one's proximity. Without such a warning, the owner might be startled by the visitor's sudden appearance, causing his soul (*kinggen*) to leave his body, resulting in illness.

Some birds are said to identify themselves since their names are onomatopoeic. The large-tailed nightjar that calls out "dok dok dok dok" is known as *on dokdok*. The call of the western black-capped lorry known as *on wiit* is "wiit

wiit wiit wiit." Although bird calls are generally classified as animal sounds (*kapang*), in some cases they are considered to carry a message or *weng*, which is also the word for human speech. The bird *on kam*, for instance, calls out "kwi kwi kwi," which is the Yonggom words for "like that, like that, like that." Other bird calls are explained by myth. In one of the Komot trickster myths, Wuk deceives a Yoknat who is trying to follow her. When the Yoknat realizes that she has tricked him, he climbs to the top of a tree and calls after her, "Wuk, Wuk..." Later the Yoknat turns into *on mimgun*, the feline owl nightjar, whose call is "wuk wuk wuk." Bird calls may also evoke strong affective responses, such as the call of *on kuni*, the hooded butcherbird, which evokes feelings of *mimyop* (sorrow and loss, see Chapter Five) for deceased relatives.

Other bird calls are treated as *bomot*, a warning or premonition that someone is in danger. For example, if one is trying to cross a river when the current is very strong, someone might call out to him, *ku bomot!* *Bomot* is also used reflexively (*ne bomot*) to describe a feeling that "something bad" is about to happen. If *on ome* (an owl) is heard calling in the village, it is considered a *bomot* that someone will die. If *on karon*, a kookaburra, is heard calling during a *yawat* cult ceremony, it is considered a *bomot* that an accident or illness may befall one of the

navies

Birds are not the only animals that can indicate *bomot* or give other messages. If a certain marsupial mouse (*ba akyap*) is found inside a house, one of the occupants is at risk (*bomot*) of illness or injury. Blue flies or bottle flies (*watmung*) are said to carry the message that there has been a death, because they are associated with rotting corpses in exposure platforms. Other natural phenomena can communicate information as well. The golden light of the sunset known as *dep aron*, named for the color of the marsupial *bandep*, portends an attack from an assault sorcerer, as does an evening sky lit up red, known as *kotere*. If there is an earthquake during a *yawat* cult ceremony the novices are regarded as *bomot*.<sup>3</sup>

Another way in which natural phenomena convey information is through their appearance in dreams, which have standardized interpretations.<sup>4</sup> A dream about *on kurim*, a crowned *guria* pigeon, indicates that an assault sorcerer will come to the village. A dream about piglets (*awon mana*) means that relatives or friends will visit the dreamer. A

---

<sup>3</sup>A mild earthquake occurred in 1986 when I was shown the bullroarer and flutes associated with the *yawat* cult. This resulted in some concern for my well-being, as I was the only person present who was not familiar with the cult objects. When I left the village several weeks later, I was told that if I became sick, I should return immediately to the village, for Western medicine would be ineffective against any illness resulting from this incident.

<sup>4</sup>For other examples of this phenomenon, see Meggitt on the Mae Enga (1962), Wagner on the Daribi (1972), Herdt on the Sambia (1981), and Weiner on the Foi (1986).

dream about *on diin*, a kingfisher, portends that the dreamer will suffer from a respiratory ailment.

Kworot told me about a dream in which he caught two turtles (*koyambon*) in a creek and gave one turtle to his brother Maweng, keeping the larger turtle for himself. The standard interpretation of a dream about a turtle is that a woman will come to live in the house of the person who acquired the turtle. I was told the meaning of Maweng's dream was consistent with the events that followed. Kworot lived with his brother Maweng and his classificatory brother Kas. Two women, like the two turtles in the dream, did indeed come to the house when both Maweng and Kas got married. One woman, however, went away with Maweng to live in another house, like the turtle Kworot gave to Maweng in the dream.

Some of the metaphors employed in dream interpretations refer to more than one dream. The interpretation of a dream about a hornbill (*on kevet*) or a palm cockatoo (*on kaputi*) is that the dreamer will suffer from skin lesions and infections. In each case, the metaphor links tree bark (*at kat* and human skin (*kat*). The hornbill regularly scratches the side of tress with its beak. Since tree bark is like human skin, the skin of someone who dreams of a hornbill will become as rough as if it were rubbed by the hornbill's beak. The palm cockatoo is one of the few birds that can split the tough husk of the okari nut (*Terminalis sp.*),

which comes from a tree (at away) noted for its rough bark. Again, the interpretation is that the skin of someone who dreams of a palm cockatoo will become as rough as the bark of the okari tree.

Many dream interpretations involve metaphors linking persons and animals. Dreams about people are often interpreted as being about hunting or catching game. For example, a metaphor links women and cassowaries. A man who dreams of a woman will go hunting the next day in search of a cassowary. Wagner (1972) has described this type of dream interpretation as the creation of an opportunity. A dream about a woman tied by the foot indicates that a cassowary has been snared in a spring snare trap. Conversely, a dream about a cassowary indicates that a woman will die.<sup>5</sup>

Another set of metaphors links men and pigs. A man who dreams of a male corpse will go hunting the next day expecting to shoot a pig. Dreams in which a man is hit by a falling tree or a man travelling in a canoe is struck by a branch overhead indicate that a pig has been caught in a deadfall trap. A dream about butchering a pig indicates the death of a man.

Metaphors employed in dream interpretation often appear in other domains. For example, the metaphor pairing okari

---

<sup>5</sup>While Yonggom dream interpretations contrast hunting and death, in Foi dream interpretations (Weiner 1986), the contrast is between hunting and sex, so that a dream about sex is interpreted as an opportunity for hunting (cf: Herdt 1981).

nuts and skin lesions is the basis for the ritual formula for removing *kubup* food taboos during *yawat* cult activities (see Chapter Ten). The metaphors linking pigs with men and cassowaries with women are used in domains ranging from everyday speech to secret *yawat* myths. I recorded this use of the metaphor linking pigs with men during the discussion of a sorcery case:

When Mundap was ill, her affines and agnates gathered in her house to discuss her illness. The suspicions centered around young Uruku and his wife, who were living with Mundap and her husband. In particular, there was concern because Uruku's wife had been carrying on an affair with another man from the village. During the discussion about possible sorcery suspects, Uruku's mother told this story:

Uruku caught two pigs on his wife's land. He brought one pig home and gave one to his wife's family. When his wife heard what he had done, she became angry and scolded him, "Why did you give away one of my pigs?"

"But then I told her," Uruku's mother continued, "that it is no good to keep two pigs to yourself."

Drawing on the metaphor of pigs and men, Uruku's mother was scolding her daughter-in-law for the affair, essentially telling her that "it is no good to keep two men to herself."

These examples illustrate the convention by which metaphors are drawn from natural images. In part, plants and animal are compelling as sources of metaphor because they are living symbols. A bird may be able to say its own name, speak words, report a death, give warning, or appear in a dream to provide a glimpse into the future. The convention of metaphorization of natural images is evident in Yonggom myth as well.

### Myth and the Origin of the Species

All persons appearing in the myth are animals, or are now animals, as the Muyu [or Yonggom] put it. Anyway, to the Muyu [or Yonggom] there is nothing strange in the transformation of a human into an animal...

J.W. Schoorl (n.d.)

Many of the characters in Yonggom myths are people with animal names. At the climax of these myths, these people become the animals for which they are named. Certain features or characteristics of these people may be retained after they have assumed animal form. For example, in a yawat cult myth, a man named *on yeem* (meliphaga bird) wore white ear plugs or earrings; after he witnessed a killing, he became the bird *on yeem*, which has a white ear patch. A man named *on kaputi* (palm cockatoo) also saw the killing; his sharpened comb became his erectile crest when he turned into a cockatoo. In the same myth, the sisters of a man killed in revenge for the murder wept for their brother; they became the cicadas whose fritinous cry is heard at twilight.

Myths in which people become animals are in one sense creation or origin myths. Writing about a similar myth among the Kaluli in which men became animals, Schieffelin suggests that the myth,

is not simply about what divisions and species appear in the world, but how to divide it up... the kinds of relations that should obtain between its significant parts (1980:507).

Myths about people becoming animals are thus also ways of representing existing relationships. Schieffelin later elaborated this point, suggesting that the myth about the creation of animals from people,

depicts the world as constructed on an analogy to the way that social groups are divided from one another. That is, the underlying principles by which species and entities in the world are set off from each other... represent a social logic which implies that the various beings are differentiated... by social opposition, tension, potential confrontation and reciprocity (1985:49).

The Kaluli myth uses nature and animal species to represent social logic, including the principle of reciprocity.

Yonggom myths about people becoming animals are dominated by the theme unrequited reciprocity. In the story of the children who became flying foxes, it was the refusal of the aunt to feed the children that led to their transformation into animals. The aunt abandoned the children, refused to feed them, and ignored the reciprocal obligations that link relatives. In this myth and others similar to it, unrequited reciprocity has disastrous consequences; the offended parties become animals.

Feld has described a similar Kaluli myth, the story of the boy who turned into a muni bird, in which a "breach of expected... behavior" leads to the "rupture of the social order" (1982:25-26). Both the Kaluli and Yonggom myths describe scenarios in which a conflict or opposition (cf: Schieffelin 1976) is represented by the change from human to

animal form. As unrequited reciprocity is a denial of the humanity of the other, the result is that the offended parties assume non-human form.

Another Yonggom myth suggests that the natural order, like the social order, is maintained by reciprocity. In this myth, a dog threatens to become human and abandon his master if he is not fed his fair share of the kill from his hunt.

Men never fed meat to their dogs until one day a dog stood on two legs and spoke to its master,

Why do you only feed me bones without meat? I chase down animals so that you can eat meat. Unless you give me my share of the meat, I will become a man and hunt by myself.

After his speech, the dog returned to four legs and patiently awaited his master's response. The man took some meat he had intended for himself and fed it to the dog. That is why the Yonggom feed meat to dogs as well as bones, for otherwise the dogs will abandon them and become men.

The dog occupies an ambiguous position within society as a domesticated wild animal. Staking its claim to being a part of the social order, the dog threatens to abandon its owner not by turning feral, but by becoming human. To maintain his relationship with the dog, the owner must preserve the balance of reciprocity; the dog hunts for the man and the man must feed him meat in return. The myth reinforces the notion that both the social and natural orders are maintained through reciprocity.

These myths suggest that nature and society are guided by the same logic of reciprocity, so that a breach in social

relations also disrupts the division between people and animals. The myths affirm the importance of reciprocity and threaten not only moral consequences, but also true chaos should people fail to maintain the norms of reciprocity.<sup>6</sup>

### Melanesian Nominalism

Nature also provides a means by which the Yonggom represent persons and groups. In naming persons and designating social groups, the Yonggom commonly employ metaphors associating animals and plants with people. Some men share the names of animals, like Bawun, named for a small marsupial, Kurim, named for the Guria pigeon, or Kati, named for the palm cockatoo. Other men are named after parts of the human body, such as Kiringkono, whose name means "nostrils." Animal names such as *on kevet* (hornbill) or *yigoro* (forest dragon) are also used in won reciprocal name partnerships that arise from sharing a meal of that animal (cf: Wagner 1972, Schieffelin 1976).<sup>7</sup> The informal nicknames that men give one another may refer also to animals, such as Kotpoop, tadpole, or Anks, the sound of a pig calling.

---

<sup>6</sup>See also the Kaluli myth of sano mano (Schieffelin 1988).

<sup>7</sup>A cohort of young men attending a *yawat* male cult ceremony together, known as *kaget* or novices, may later refer to one another as *kaget won*.

Most Yonggom clans (*ambip kin*) trace their descent from a particular animal or plant species. Members of Kueman clan, for example, say that the first member of their clan broke off from an *om kuem* sago tree. Wambiran clan members claim descent from the eel (*on aawat*). Yemet clan members claim descent not from an animal or plant species, but from a "spirit child" (*awat dana*), a standard figure in Yonggom myths.

Some clans recognize a restriction or taboo (*amop*) on the consumption of the animal or plant that represents their clan; Kueman clan members, for example, will not eat sago from the *om kuem* sago tree. Breaking the restriction would cause illness. Similarly, members of Wambiran clan will not eat eel. Yetini clan members, however, who claim descent from a marsupial (*ba od*), say that they eat it freely without ill effect. Other clans claim descent from an inedible species; thus, the Meremko clan traces its descent to the tree at *meremko*, which produces no edible fruit or starch.

The longest genealogies I recorded went back four ascending generations from ego. A man often knows the name of his paternal grandfather, but it is usually the only name he knows from that generation. I recorded only one genealogy that traced a clan back to its putative totemic origin from a cuscus marsupial -- all within four generations. The man who gave me the genealogy was the only

member in his clan living in the village and thus had no one with whom to consult about the genealogy that he presented to me.

Each clan can be additionally represented by a plant species. Wambiran clan, for example, is also associated with the tree at *karet kubunan*. Yat clan is represented by the black palm *yerot*. Since these relationships between clans and plant species are widely known, it is possible to use a branch or a cluster of leaves from the appropriate tree as a clan marker. Such clan markers are used in various ways. They may indicate ownership of a partially-harvested trunk of sago, or a pandanus tree bearing fruit, or a packet of sago sent as an invitation (*dowat*) to attend an *arat* pig feast. They also may mark a barricaded path meant to keep people away from a garden or a camping place. Instead of using the branches or leaves of the tree, one may also inscribe into a tree trunk the outline of a plant representing the clan. This is sometimes referred to as *aamgono yi wongge*, "the writing of the elder generation."<sup>8</sup>

The Yonggom have also developed a system of names to refer to other groups of people (see Table 4). While most of these names date to the colonial and post-colonial

---

<sup>8</sup>Ketien, a mildly retarded boy, attended primary school with his age-mates. Since he never learned to read or write, when the teacher gave writing assignments to the students, he would draw pictures of animals and turn in the paper at the end of the class. Ketien considered his pictures to be the equivalent of writing, much like the phrase *aamgono ye wongge*.

periods, the names for neighboring peoples may have been in use prior to that. These exonyms, like other naming systems, are based on plant or animal species, or other natural objects.

The exonyms are based on characteristics attributed to a given population. Out of a 15 such names, 6 refer to what they eat, 2 to their appearance, 2 to aspects of their traditional attire, 2 to the sound of their language or the way they speak, and 2 to other behavior. One group, with whom the Yonggom traditionally fought, are known by a derogatory appellation. These exonyms are used in the village to refer to outsiders; in urban contexts they enable the Yonggom to other people without fear of being overheard and understood. Typically someone might point out that the driver of a passing vehicle is a *ba od* marsupial (i.e. a man from Sepik Province) or caution someone that *omborop* sweet potatoes (i.e. highlanders) like to fight when drunk. The Yonggom also have a name for themselves in keeping with the logic of this classification; they call themselves *om kok yum kok*, or "dry sago, dry bananas," in part because these are their two staple foods.

Table 4: Yonggom Exonyms for  
other groups from Papua New Guinea

-Group, Province	Name(s)	Justification
--Awin(Aekyom)	on wawute	birds that sing at the same time (rather than one after the other) because this is how Awin men are said to talk.
	wot bop sago grubs	they eat a lot of sago grubs
	awon pig	it is said they can change into pigs when hunting
Biami, Western	motibin owet kok bamboo nostrils	they wear bamboo through their nose
Buka, North Solomons	amot bin charcoal	they have very black skin
Faiwol, Western	yemen taro	taro is their staple food
	ba ot marsupial	they sleep piled on top of one another like marsupials that live in a tree hole
Gogodala, Western	on kono fish bones	they eat a lot of fish
Highlanders	boteng/omborop sweet potatoes	sweet potatoes are their staple food
Kiwai, Western	owet kok bamboo	they are tall like bamboo
Middle Fly peoples, Western	yirik <sup>9</sup>	a derogatory appellation which refers to fibers that are chewed up and spit out, as when eating sugar cane

<sup>9</sup>The term *yirik* includes many of the groups from the Middle Fly, including the Boazi, Zimakani, and Kuem (Mandobo) people. Austen (1922) refers these people as Tchirik or Chirik, probably using the Yonggom name.

**Table Four: Exonyms (continued)**

Group, Province	Name(s)	Justification
Milne Bay & Central Province	<i>orom kimiring</i> fruit flies	they eat many coconuts, the discarded husks from which attract fruit flies
Ningerum, Western	<i>ba wang</i> marsupial	their language sounds cry of this marsupial
Sepik	<i>wabot kok</i> penis sheaths	the people from Telefolmin have the longest penis sheaths
Tolai, Britain	<i>kaban kono</i> betelnut	they chew a lot of New betelnut

In addition, animal names are sometimes used for people of different nationalities. Indonesians may be referred to as *ba yawang* because they have soft hair like this marsupial, and Phillipinos may be called *koyaran kat kono* because they are said to resemble this type of frog. Other names for nationalities are borrowed from the public domain, such as "Kangaroo" for Australians, "Kiwi" (the bird) for New Zealanders, and "Eagle" for Americans.

#### Language and Nature

Among the names given to plant and animal species in the Yonggom language are numerous pairs of homonyms. Some of these homonyms draw attention to similarities between species, such as *on yurun*, a flat fish with sharp fins, and *awon yurun dit*, a young pig with its lower tusks just emerging. Another example is the vine *yirim nong*, which is

round and thick and twists around, and the tree at *yirim*, which has long branches that wrap around themselves. Species linked by a homonym may have an ecological relationships, such as the variety of sago *om wi* and the bird *on wi*, which is attracted to the refuse at sago preparation sites. Even an imperfect homonym may be the vehicle for a meaningful association; for example, the heavy rains of June and July are known as *yimigaim*, while the migratory birds associated with this period are *on yimigon*.

Similar linguistic relationships exist between species of plants or animals and social categories. For example, *kevet* is the name of the hornbill (*on kevet*) as well as the term for a bachelor (*kevet man*). For a bachelor who hopes to attract the amorous attentions of women, the analogy with the hornbill is appropriate. Not only is the beak of the hornbill phallic, but the hornbill's nesting pattern suggests an act of sexual intercourse (cf: Barth 1987:41fn). When the female incubates her eggs, she retreats into a tree hole which, apart from a vertical slit, she seals off with mud. The male feeds the cloistered female by thrusting his beak through this opening. The sexual imagery of the hornbill is well marked; only *aamgono* (senior men) can eat the meat of a hornbill caught during this period of seclusion, the beak of the hornbill is used as a penis sheath for certain dances, and a myth about violating *yawat*

cult food taboos (*kubup*) taboos uses the hornbill as its example.

Other linguistic relationships between plant and animal species are reflected in principles of classification. The term for both birds and fish, for example, is *on*.<sup>10</sup> Birds are at *ari on*, or *on* "on the trees," while fish are *ok yiri on*, or *on* "under the water." The pairing of birds and fish suggests a conceptual complementarity between the rain forest and the world beneath the surface of the river. To me, this division is borne out visually in the interior lowland rain forests, where the only horizons are along the rivers. At these junctures, an image of the rain forest is reflected onto the river's surface and the line of the horizon seems to divide the world into two spheres, one a reflection of the other.

The pairing of land and water is also borne out by suggestions that events that take place on land are somehow mirrored by events occurring beneath the water. Thus it is said that during pig feasts (*arat*), select *aamgono* (senior men) attend feasts under the rivers known as *ok arat* or *water arat*. These men are said to attend these underwater feasts sponsored by the crocodiles and return with their string bags filled with cowrie shells (*od*). Some *aamgono*

---

<sup>10</sup>In the *Kataut* dialect to the north, while bird is *on*, fish is *ton*.

even dress up for arat pig feasts<sup>11</sup> in long false beards made of sago shoots and dance in style of *on arim*, a yellow and black fish involved in one version of the mythic charter of the *yawat* cult. Whereas men decorate themselves as birds for most dances, during arat pig feasts these men don the costume of the bird's metaphorical counterpart and dance as fish.

Many *ketbon* or sacred clan places are underwater. For instance, *andok*, a *ketbon* of Yeremot clan, is at the base of a waterfall. When one approaches *andok*, the sky is said to darken. When one looks into the water at the base of the waterfall, a pig looks back up. Another *ketbon* of Yeremot clan, called *ok kurun*, is also located at the base of a waterfall. The spirits (*awat*) of a man and a woman are said to live inside the pool at the base of the waterfall.

Some myths also reveal another world beneath the surface of the water. In one myth, a sago spirit known as *omgere* lives in a house under the water. In the myth about an orphan, when the main character dives below the surface of a lake, he comes upon a house occupied by an old woman, who cooks him a meal of sago. The old woman asks the orphan to climb a coconut palm and bring her several green coconuts. She gives him one of the coconuts in return, which he brings back onto land where it turns into a young woman whom the orphan takes as his wife.

---

<sup>11</sup>Also known as *bit arat* or *land arat*.

Other homonym pairs for plant and animal species seem to be entirely arbitrary. *Kawa*, for instance, is the name for the Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo (*on kawa*) and the Mangrove Monitor lizard (*yi kawa yi*). *Biip* is the name of a bird (*on biip*) as well as a tree (*at biip*). *Et* is the generic term for grasshoppers, and *et et* is the generic term for small fruits growing in the rain forest. *Kom* is a type of fish (*on kom*) as well as a strain of pigs with reddish hair (*awon kom*).<sup>12</sup>

Despite their seemingly arbitrary origins, many of these homonyms show symbolic elaboration. Let me illustrate this point with the example of *demoyop*, which is both the name of a kind of crayfish with long claws, and the wild fig tree (*(Ficus sp.)*). The homonym pair organizes a myth about a husband and his wife. The two were fishing in a stream when she caught a *demoyop* crayfish. She decided to play a trick on her husband, so while he was bent over, she placed the crayfish beside his genitals. When the claws snapped shut on his testicles, he howled with pain. On the way back to the house, he was still angry, so he told his wife to climb a *demoyop* tree to collect wild figs. He directed her to stand on two separate branches, spreading her legs apart. While she was busy collecting figs, he shot an arrow straight up and killed her. The symmetry that the homonym pair of crayfish and wild figs gives to the myth is

---

<sup>12</sup>Found east of the Ok Tedi River.

paralleled by the way in which the actions of the husband-wife pair balance.

### **The Cultural Life of Natural Things**

Natural materials retain some of their symbolic associations even during their life as cultural things. Many objects made by the Yonggom are given the same name as the primary raw material from which they are composed. Braided armbands known as *yeet* are made from the vine *nong yeet*. A woman's *wonom* bullrush skirt is made from the fibers of a *wonom* bullrush. A *yirim* rattan cuirass is made from *yirim nong* rattan. *Wereep* is the name of a conical fish trap, the interior of which is lined with the vine *nong wereep*. The way in which the objects are named emphasize the relationship between the raw material and the finished product; as a result, a great many plant species are associated with the objects into which they are fashioned.

The use of a given material may elaborate upon an established metaphor drawn from nature. The cassowary and the lowlands pandanus (*aim*) are closely linked because cassowaries are known to steal the fruit from men. Bone tools (*dorop*) made from cassowary femora are used to prepare the fruit for cooking. The *ambi*, or "male" tool, has a pointed end and is used to cut the long fruit in half lengthwise. The *yinggi*, or "female" tool, has a blunt tip and is used to separate the fruit from the core, like corn

from the cob. When the cassowary consumes the rich, oily fruit of the red pandanus, the spoor it leaves behind is likened to menstrual blood, enhancing the cassowary's symbolic status as a woman.

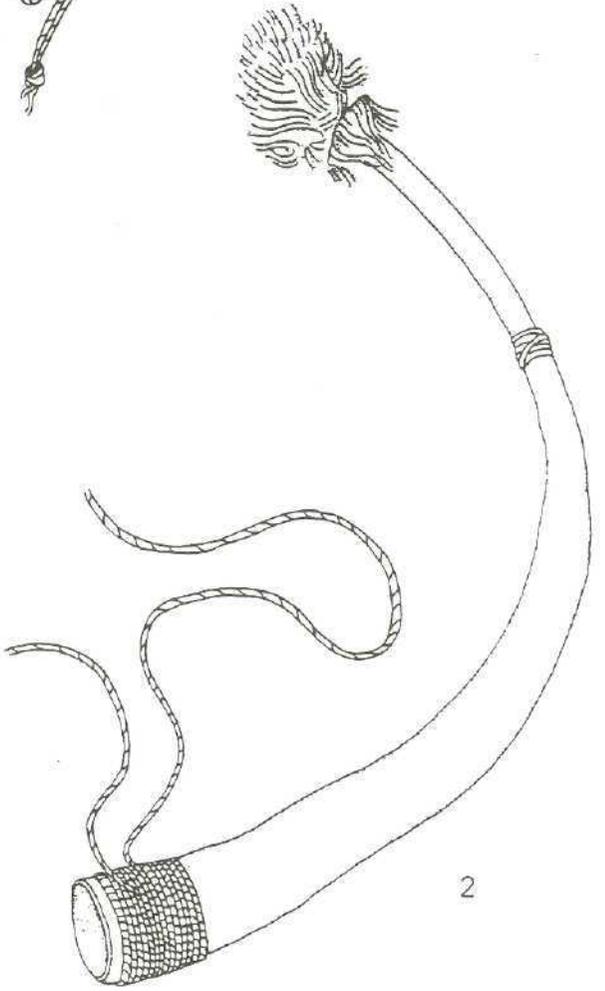
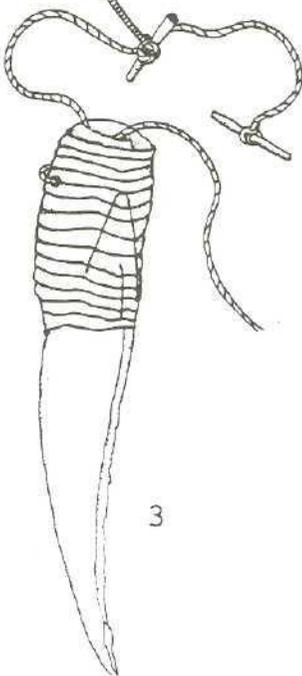
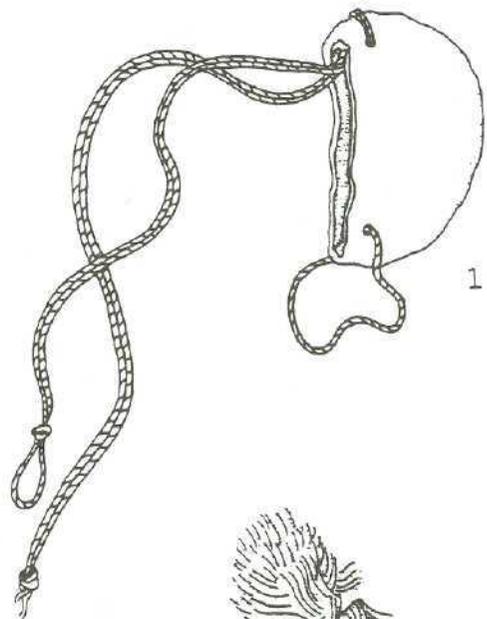
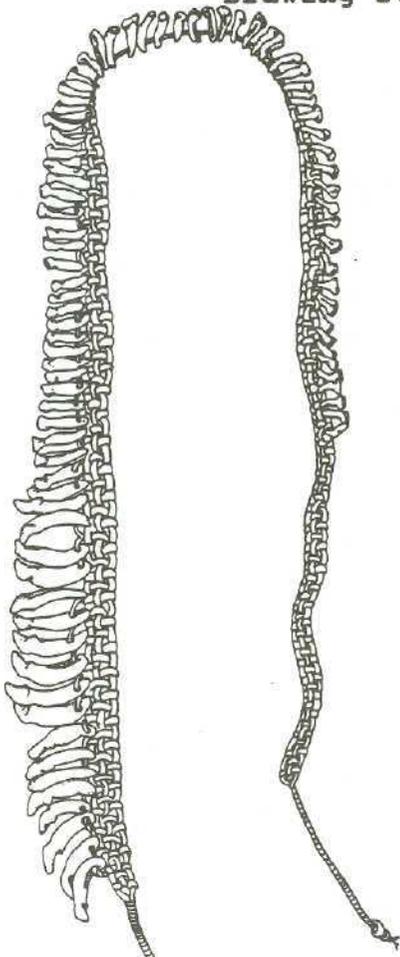
The contrast between ordinary and ceremonial versions of the same objects provides a useful illustration of the way in which manufactured objects can draw on the symbolic associations of natural materials from which they are made. Until the introduction of cloth, daily attire for men was a length of vine (*kobem nong*) belted just above the hips, and a seed husk worn over the glans of the penis. Two type of seed husk were used, the round *mamundin yop* that comes from a tree which resembles an oil palm, and *orom yop*, which has a flattened oval shape and comes from wild mango trees growing along the floodplains of the Fly River. Both types of seed husk are small (about 3.5 cm long by 2.5 cm wide) and undecorated; they serve to preserve the wearer's modesty (see Drawing 2).

The penis sheaths worn during feasts and dances, however, emphasize sexual imagery by drawing on the symbolic associations of the natural materials from which they are made. For some dance performances<sup>13</sup>, men wear penis sheaths made from a hornbill beaks (*on kevet korok*). Not only is the hornbill beak a sexual symbol par excellence, as I have described it above, but wearing a hornbill penis sheath is a

---

<sup>13</sup>*Amewop*, *urumanop*, and sometimes *ketmom*.

Drawing 2: Yonggom Penis Sheaths



**Labels for Drawing 2**

1. Mango Seed Penis Sheath, called *orom yop*, type *karap yop*. (University Museum, 89-17-54A). Purchased from maker, Nem Kowop, Meremko clan, Dome Village.
  
2. Gourd Penis Sheath, called *wabot* (University Museum, 89-17-57). Purchased from maker, Kukweng Yacobus, Komdoan clan, Ninati village, Irian Jaya, living in Dome Refugee Camp.
  
3. Hornbill Beak Penis Sheath, called *on kevet korok* (University Museum, 89-17-59). Made by Atani Wungmo, Ketbiran clan, Dome village. Purchased from Kebenam Aniap, Meremko clan, Dome village.

particularly appropriate mode of dress for bachelors (*kevetman* or "hornbill men") who hope to impress the women who see them. When gourd penis sheaths (*wabot*) are worn for ceremonial occasions, the long gourd (about 35 cm in length) may be decorated with a tuft of white or yellow-white *bandep* marsupial fur at the tip. Whereas Heider (1969:387-8) has argued that, for the Highland Dani, the gourd penis sheath "is not, in any explicit way, a focus of... sexuality or eroticism," the Yonggom *wabot* clearly represents a symbolic erection and orgasm. The sexual connotation is not merely implicit; when I purchased a *wabot* from Kukweng, he expressed *mimyop* (sorrow and loss) over parting with his gourd, telling me how, on the many occasions he danced wearing it, young women offered themselves to him.

Other objects are named using metaphors drawn from natural images, but on the basis of the appearance of the created object rather than the raw materials used. For example, the pattern made by twining cane around the palm floorboards of a house is referred to as "footprints of the sulphur-crested cockatoo" (*on kawa yon*), which it resembles. This naming pattern is also followed in the case of some introduced objects. For example, a plane is likened to a brahminy kite (*on kambep*), which swoops down on its prey. A mirror is *ok kuruak*, which refers to the reflection or image (*kuruak*) that appears on the surface of still water (*ok*). Pictures and photographs are *kuruak*, reflections or

images. Bicycles are jokingly referred to as *koworom*, because their tires are tubular, like the rattan *nong koworom*. Paper is *begot*, named after the leaves used to roll tobacco. A shirt is *ep kat*, "your skin," and shoes are *yon kat*, "feet skin."

Although there are two counting systems in the Yonggom language, most people use either English or Indonesian numerals.<sup>14</sup> When discussing a purchase, however, the price may be represented in terms of the animals and objects depicted on Papua New Guinea currency. Thus the twenty kina note is referred to *awon* (pig), a twenty toea coin as *diap* (cassowary), and a ten toea coin as *ba* (marsupial). If someone makes a purchase in town for twenty kina and twenty-five toea, he might say that the price (*od*) was a pig, a cassowary, and a marsupial.

### **The Taste of Natural Things**

Cultural meanings drawn from natural relationships are taken not only from visual images but from the entire range of sensory experience. A good smell (*bep amun*) is considered attractive and desirable. When walking through the rain forest, it is common to cut off a section of

---

<sup>14</sup>One counting system is based on body parts, starting with the left hand and counting toward the thumb, up the arm, and down the other side. The other system of counting is used exclusively for cowrie shell valuables (*od*) and is based on sets of three and six. Some of the numerals used in the counting system based on body parts also are used in the system for counting *od*.

aromatic tree bark for its good smell. Aromatic leaves are often used to scoop water from drinking holes because of their good smell. More than once I observed a man in the midst of a boisterous discussion pause to bend down, tear off a blade of lemon grass, and smell its perfume before resuming his speech. Dancers bathe and then rub themselves with aromatic tree bark to give their skin a good smell before covering their bodies with colored clay. Good smells are associated with green, growing things. A good smell is felt to convey a positive quality associated with vitality and attractiveness.

A bad smell (*bep arewah*) is considered repugnant and unhealthy. Water unfit for drinking, rotten meat, and the odor of fermentation from discarded fibers at a sago-processing place are all considered to have a bad smell. The accumulation of bad smells from dog and pig feces is said to make a house uninhabitable. The problem of pig feces along villages paths is the subject of perpetual debate. A dream about cleaning feces is interpreted to mean that someone is angry (*nurin*) with the dreamer. Before traditional burial practices were abandoned, a corpse left to decompose on a funeral bier would have a bad smell and white clay would be smeared over the structure to keep the smell away from the adjacent house. A graveyard is considered to have a bad smell and is thus a place to be avoided. Villagers do not like to pass through the sago

swamp below the village graveyard because of its bad smell. Bad smells are associated with rotting, fermenting, decaying things, and convey a negative quality associated with ill health and loss of vitality.<sup>15</sup>

Both menstruating women and men returning from yawat cult activities are said to have a rotten, decaying, fermenting bad smell that is unhealthy and repugnant. The smell of a menstruating woman is known as *ipdem*; exposure to it is said to cause men to suffer from respiratory ailments (*inum*).<sup>16</sup> Similarly, men who attend yawat cult activities acquire a bad smell known as *yawat ulip*, from the clearing made for yawat activities.<sup>17</sup> (*Ulip* also refers to the bad smell of the clearing made by a brush turkey (*on monowan*) when it incubates its eggs beneath a mound of decaying leaves and other organic material). Improper contact with these men is said to result in sickness and lethargy. A number of restrictions apply equally to menstruating women and men returning from yawat; for example, they should avoid giving food to others or stepping over a person's food or hearth.

---

<sup>15</sup>The Yonggom say that the reason Europeans bathe frequently is that they dislike the smell of their own skin. Frequent bathing is considered equivalent to disguising oneself.

<sup>16</sup>*Inum* includes pneumonia, respiratory tuberculosis, and bronchitis.

<sup>17</sup>Schoorl (1957:109) suggests that the word *ipdem* or *iptem* may also be used to refer to pollution from the yawat cult.

Taste is also a rich source of metaphor. Since the Yonggom cook with few spices<sup>18</sup> and generally prepare each item separately, food rather than cuisine is the basis of metaphorical elaboration. While the staples of the Yonggom diet, sago and bananas, are very bland, they are not entirely tasteless. Different varieties of bananas have subtle flavor differences ranging from nut-like to fruity, and the ripening process that transforms their starch into sugars also affects their taste. For sago, flavor and consistency depend more upon freshness than the variety of the palm. New sago (*om yewep*) congeals into a more palatable texture when baked and has the fermented tang of apple cider or sourdough bread. Older sago, which must be mixed with water before being baked, has a dry, crumbly texture and a flat, unappetizing taste. Old, dry sago known as *om kok* is considered to be hard to swallow and to scratch one's throat.

These dry, starchy foods form the bulk of the Yonggom diet. Since sago and bananas have little more to offer nutritionally than carbohydrates (cf: May 1977), they must be consumed in great quantities. As a result, the Yonggom often refer to themselves as *om kok yum kok*, dry sago, dry bananas. The phrase is also repeated in self-deprecating humor when there is little else to eat but sago and bananas.

---

<sup>18</sup>This is changing, particularly among Yonggom refugees from Irian Jaya, who regularly cook with chili peppers.

By claiming satisfaction (*yimen*) with these basic foods, the phrase also refers to the ethic of being neither greedy (*girim*) nor demanding (*karak ipban*, having no shame).

What is eaten in the village contrasts strongly with what is eaten in the rain forest. One can obtain a great variety of foods in the rain forest through foraging and collecting, including such edible insects as animals as grubs and larvae, ants, spiders, grasshoppers, frogs, fish, prawns, and lizards. Plants and trees yield seasonal fruits and berries, flower buds, nuts, and starchy palm hearts, many of which are chewed but not swallowed. Numerous small animals, including birds, marsupials and flying fox, fall prey to arrows and stones shot from rubber slingshots. Unlike the bland fare of the village, produce gathered in the rain forest tends to have strong and often overpowering flavors: acrid nuts, astringent wild figs, fruits that are sour like unripe apples, flower buds that are cloyingly sweet, and rich prawn meat. Also unlike food consumed in village, rain forest products are usually eaten in small quantities as they are being gathered.

Even though larger kills taken in the nearby rain forest are brought back to the village and shared, this does not compensate entirely for the steady diet of sago and bananas that are said to leave villagers hungry, especially for meat and fat. When people grow tired of village fare, they often move to secondary homes in the distant rain

forest where game and other edible resources are more abundant. In contrast to the village, the rain forest is described as a place of abundance in which one's hungers are always satisfied (*yimen*). The contrast between hunger and abundance is also a subtle critique of the way of life imposed under the regime of villages that was established by the government.

Sounds from the natural environment are used in constructing a variety of metaphors. Call-and-response singing ceremonies are held for events such as the completion of a house (*ambip aram*), the yawat cult feast (*yawat yok*), or a successful hunt (*banggom*).<sup>19</sup> Each event has its own corpus of songs, though many of the songs are sung out of context as well. In some cases the meaning of a song does not depend on the literal meaning of its words, but rather on the sounds produced by singing. For example, the yawat cult song about cooking pig fat over a fire uses onomatopoeia:

<i>Beree ok mo yumyang</i>	the pig fat (makes the sound) <i>yumyang</i>
<i>berree ok mo eh</i>	the pig fat, <i>eh</i>
<i>yumyang-ah</i>	<i>yumyang-ah</i>
<i>yumyang-ah</i>	<i>yumyang-ah</i>

---

<sup>19</sup>Other occasions on which song ceremonies are held include a cannibal feast (*ayi aram*), an arat pig feast (*kumut*), and a wake (*konkum*).

eh beree ok mo

eh, the pig fat

yumyang-ah

yumyang-ah

An *ambip aram* song about the rapid completion of a house incorporates the word *kon*, which is also onomatopoeic. *Kon* is the call of a bird which, on a very hot day, has immersed itself in a creek or river. The bird calls out *kon* and the other birds, waiting in the trees along the river, swoop down and join him in the water. While the words of the song have no literal meaning, they create an image through sound:

oh, kon kon oh, duri-ah-oh

ari kon kon eh, duri-ah-eh

oh, kon kon oh, duri-ah-oh

The song compares how the pieces of the house came together swiftly, like the birds in the song that followed the first bird into the water. I also heard Kutem sing this song after he had cut some reeds for uses as arrow shafts; in this case it referred to the other material needed to complete the arrows.

Another example of the way in which natural sounds are reproduced in cultural form is the Yonggom slit-gong drum. Known as a *garamut* in Melanesian pidgin, these instruments are common along the north coast and islands of Papua New Guinea (Gourlay 1975:12), but rare among Papuan peoples. A Yonggom slit-gong drum is roughly a meter long and tapered

at either end.<sup>20</sup> It is neither carved nor decorated and is struck on the inside, using a river stone, rather than on the outside with mallets as is common elsewhere.

A Yonggom split-gong is struck after a raid (*bitaan*) in which someone has been killed. The sound travels a great distance; the occupants of distant homesteads were thus warned about the possibility of a raid being staged in reprisal for the killing. The Yonggom name for the instrument is *wong*, which is onomatopoeic; the sound produced by striking the slit-gong is described as *wong wong wong wong*. The same sound can be made by thumping a hollow tree trunk in the rain forest, which is another way to announce that there has been a killing and which, indeed, the slit-gong drum is an imitation.

Another rich source of natural metaphors are the movements of animals. For example, the way in which the back of woman's skirt flips back and forth when she is pounding sago pith is likened to the movement of the tail of a monitor lizard (*yi ata*). The imitation of animal movements is most pronounced during dance performances such as *amewop*, which I observed when my house was completed:

There were fourteen dancers, including two women, when *amewop* was danced in my new house. Tied to the upper arms of each man was a cascade of green-yellow sago fronds (*om miim*), perhaps a meter in length. I was

---

<sup>20</sup>The first record of a slit-gong in the Fly-Digul Plateau was Austen's (1922:137) report of a "small canoe, about 3 feet long... for beating on to send messages from the village..."

told that when the dancers raised their arms, the streamers flared out like the wings of a bird. Each male dancer wore feathers of the Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo across his forehead, which were held in place by a nassa or basket shell headband (*yinam*), bark, or manufactured cloth. Some men wore a golden Greater Bird of Paradise plume (*ono miim*) as well. Each headdress included a pair of cockatoo wingfeathers inserted into a cassowary quill (*diap nonggop*) and weighted by several round, red *keren* or *wunum* seeds so that, during dancing, the feathers would oscillate back and forth like a counter-balanced pendulum. The dancers also wore sago fronds attached to their legs below the knee. Although they were wearing shorts, the costume for *amewop* is a hornbill penis sheath (*on kevet korok*) secured around the waist with a string of dog's teeth.

In the initial sequence of the dance, the men, sitting or squatting in two concentric circles, sang and used their bows as percussion instruments.<sup>21</sup> After a few minutes, the men stood and formed a single file line. The lead dancer moved the length of the house, pointing both feet left and then right, and turning his body from side to side. The other dancers followed his movements, sometimes holding the man in front by the elbows and turning in tandem with him. When the dancers came close to the people seated against the far wall, they turned and resumed dancing in the opposite direction. They continued to sing while dancing; between verses they whistled by inhaling through their mouths.

The two women dancers wore grass skirts, sago fronds on their arms and legs, and cockatoo feather headdresses. They stood off to one side and danced in place, following the same steps as the men.

The dancing continued until daybreak, when the dancers went outside, once again formed two concentric circles, and ended the dance with *kubup* shouts.

The adornment of the dancers in *amewop* contributes to their kinesthetic imitation of birds by translating the dance into the flowing movements of sago fronds and the

---

<sup>21</sup>On the horn of each bow was a cassowary toenail (*diap turuk*) which rattled noisily when the bow-string was plucked.

pulsing of cockatoo feathers. That the dancers are not decorated with colored clay, as in a dance like *ok dong* or *ketmom*, also emphasizes the kinetic and the aural rather than the purely visual elements of the dance. For the dancers themselves, the trance-like exhaustion that results from the long night of dancing must contribute to the sensation of being in another form (cf: Feld 1982). Other birds and animals are imitated in other dances, perhaps the most dramatic of which is *yok*, in which dancers imitate the courtship display of the Greater and Raggiana Birds of Paradise (*ono*):<sup>22</sup>

#### **Natural Images and Magic**

The aim of this chapter was to illustrate how the Yonggom make use of metaphors drawn from natural images in creating meaning. The description of these metaphors forms a prelude to the discussion of Yonggom magic that follows in the next three chapters. Lewis (1988) has shown how magic has a "look of familiarity" to its practitioners, and how this differs from the exotic representation of magic by

---

<sup>22</sup>The Yonggom dance known as *yok* was learned from the Awin (Aekyom), who call it *siane*. When the Yonggom living along the Ok Tedi River dance *yok*, they may invite Awin men to come and sing the verses. While Depew (1983) reports that his informants did not explicitly acknowledge any relationship between the dancers and birds of paradise, the Yonggom I spoke with readily acknowledged that *yok* dancers imitate the courtship display of the birds.

anthropologist. For the Yonggom, the familiar look of magic is based on the conventions that I have described in this chapter for drawing metaphors from natural images.

## **Chapter Seven: Magic and Metaphor**

When someone teaches you waruk (magic spells), you do not stand face to face, but back to back; you do not look at him.

-- Soter Kambayang

### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I suggested that Yonggom magic is based on metaphors drawn from natural images and acquires a "look of familiarity" from the conventionalization of these metaphors. In this chapter, I begin with an example that illustrates this point of view. Among the Yonggom, cassowaries are metaphorically female and Yonggom magic associated with cassowaries depends on this metaphor.

Next I discuss several Yonggom mythological creatures that are part-human and part-animal. Although part-natural, these mythological creatures lie beyond the normal range of animals. They have magical powers that are based on the metaphorical supplementation of their natural images as human counterparts.

### **Metamorphosis of the Cassowary**

Standing nearly as tall as a man and covered with black shaggy plumage, the cassowary is a large flightless bird like an ostrich or an emu. Its bare face and long neck are colored red, blue, and purple; its head is crowned by a bony outgrowth known as a casque. The cassowary stares through unblinking eyes, turning its head from side to side in avian fashion. It is endowed with powerful legs, sharp claws, and

a dangerous kick. Although the cassowary moves with an awkward gait, it can run at great speed.<sup>1</sup>

Cassowaries inhabit the rain forest where they feed largely on fallen fruit. They swim easily across creeks and rivers. Most often seen at the forest edge and along river banks, cassowaries are timid and strive to avoid people. As a result, the usual indications of a cassowary's presence are its distinctive footprints and spoor left along forest trails, or its low, booming call heard from a distance. Cassowaries are solitary and perhaps territorial (Beehler et al. 1986:45).

The female lays her eggs on the ground and the male protects them. Cassowary chicks are covered with grey fuzz striped with brown. They attain adult size in a year, during which time they acquire dull brown immature plumage, which turns to black the following year (ibid).

The cassowary is one of the major game animals for the Yonggom. Its plumes, bones, and claws have practical and ritual uses.<sup>2</sup> The eggs of the cassowary, like those of the

---

<sup>1</sup>The species of cassowary common throughout the south central lowlands of Papua New Guinea is the Southern Cassowary (Casuarus casuarus). It is the tallest of the cassowary species, averaging 1.5 meters, and can be distinguished from the other two species of cassowaries by its triangular, blade-like casque and split or divided wattle (Beehler et al. 1986).

<sup>2</sup>A cassowary wing bone may be sharpened for use as an awl (yibin), leg bone for a tool for processing pandanus (dorop), plumage for a headdress (wam), and claw for a rattle (turuk).

bush fowl, are also prized as food. Cassowaries are difficult to hunt with a bow for they are often scared away before the hunter can release an arrow and may outrun the hunter even after being struck with an arrow. Most cassowaries are caught using snare traps. If a cassowary tending its young is snared, the chicks may be captured as well. These chicks are at first kept penned up (to protect them from dogs), but once grown they may be left to roam freely during the day. In captivity adult cassowaries become bad-tempered and can inflict serious wounds if cornered.

The cassowary is an anomalous creature. It is much larger than any other bird, virtually wingless, and it cannot fly. It is a hairy egg-layer and the only large terrestrial biped in New Guinea apart from man. It is not surprising that in many Melanesian societies, the cassowary is not considered a bird at all and is often in a class by itself. Bulmer (1967) has argued that this has more to do with its relationship to human society than with its anomalous features.

Among the Karam, a Western Highlands fringe people, the classification of the cassowary is related to the opposition between the forest and the areas under cultivation (Bulmer 1967). Like dogs and pigs, which are partially domesticated wild animals, the cassowary occupies an ambiguous position vis-à-vis this dichotomy. The cassowary's place in the

forest parallels man's place in the areas under cultivation; the cassowary is the forest counterpart of man, and cassowary hunting is a carefully regulated act, like the killing of men. The Karam even refer to cassowaries as "cross-cousins," with whom they also have ambivalent relations. Thus, Bulmer argues that cassowaries are the "metaphorical cognates" of men (ibid:20).

Bulmer does not, however, pursue the fact that the cassowary is also explicitly gendered: the cassowary is female. In a myth told by the Karam, a sister becomes a cassowary when tricked by her brother; he later obtains wives as a result of her death. When Karam men refer to cassowaries as "cross-cousins," it is women they are speaking of, "sisters" who must marry out. Cassowaries are thus the "metaphorical cognates" of women. The ability of the cassowary to symbolically mediate between "nature" and "culture" is probably associated with their symbolic female status.

The cassowary is also a gendered natural symbol for many other people in Melanesia. It does not, however, evoke the same meaning in each society. The Kaluli of the Papuan Plateau also consider the cassowary to be metaphorically female (Schieffelin 1976, Feld 1982). They are considered to be shadows or reflections of women in the unseen world, and women appear in the unseen world in cassowary form. When a woman dies, her wild cassowary aspect disappears from

the unseen world (Schieffelin 1976). Women are also the referents of cassowaries in the "turned-over" metaphorical speech of the Kaluli (Feld 1982:65). The cassowary is not the only bird that the Kaluli consider female, and it is more specifically associated with young, unmarried (and non-menstruating) girls (ibid:68).

Gell (1975) reports that the Umeda of the upper Sepik River describe the cassowary as wild, dangerous, and aggressive. The cassowary lives in the distant forest, avoids the village, and is rarely seen and infrequently killed. Like Bulmer (1967), Gell argues that the "sociological image" of the cassowary threatens the "boundaries between nature and culture" (ibid:338). For the Umeda, however, the cassowary is male and its wild and aggressive behavior is considered masculine. That the cassowary is a man is the "open secret" (ibid:228) which lies at the heart of the fertility ritual that Gell analyzes. Here, a cassowary representing humanity in its wild and natural state, metamorphoses into a bowman, representing society and the domestication of nature.

Herdt (1981) reports that the Sambia of the Eastern Highlands see the cassowary as a violent and unruly beast.<sup>3</sup> Noting that cassowaries are few and furtive, he likens them to "unseen phantoms." As is common among other Eastern

---

<sup>3</sup>"Sambia" is a pseudonym for an Anga-speaking group of the Eastern Highlands.

Highlands societies, the cassowary hunter occupies a specialized role (cf: Godelier 1986), in keeping with the symbolic importance of the cassowary. Like the Karam and the Kaluli, the Sambia regard the cassowary as female, and women do not eat their meat because they regard them as "age-mates" (Herdt 1981:145). Men compare the appetites of the cassowary to the promiscuous sexual appetites of women. The analogy is complicated, however, because the cassowary displays the aggressive and violent behavior associated with men. According to Herdt, the cassowary "defies domestication" (*ibid*:132)<sup>4</sup> and is "ascribed the ruggedness of masculinity needed to survive in the wild" (*ibid*:133-134). Cassowaries are thus "masculinized females," and Herdt concludes his discussion of the subject by arguing that the cassowary is a "perfect bisexual representation for [Sambia] men" (*ibid*:153).

Among the Yonggom, the cassowary (*diap*) is also a gendered natural symbol, the metaphorical equivalent of a woman. In chapter six I noted how, in dream interpretations, women stand for cassowaries and cassowaries stand for women. As among the Kaluli, this equation is complemented by a similar equation between pigs and men.

Among the Yonggom, the relationship between cassowary and woman is a cultural motif that appears in domains as diverse as myth, exchange, and song. In the *demoyop*

---

<sup>4</sup>The Sambia do not capture and tame cassowary chicks.

crayfish and wild fig myth, after the husband kills his wife, he gives her heart to his mother-in-law to eat, claiming that he has killed a cassowary. Under certain circumstances a man whose married sister dies is entitled to request from his brother-in-law a mortuary compensation payment (*bop kibi*) of a live cassowary. In a *banggom* song that is sung while waiting for the meat from a hunt to cook, a woman's skirt (*wonom*) is compared to the feathers of a cassowary:

<i>Kutup op ne wonom ku</i>	Straight is my skirt
<i>naruap naru-eh</i>	Do not cut it, do not cut it, eh
<i>kutup op ne wonom a-eh</i>	Straight is my skirt, a-eh
<i>Ne wonom a-eh</i>	My skirt, a-eh
<i>ne diap, kutup op</i>	My cassowary, it is straight
<i>ne wonom a-eh</i>	My skirt, a-eh
<i>Kutup op ne wonom ku</i>	Straight is my skirt
<i>naruap, naru-eh</i>	Do not cut it, do not cut it, eh
<i>Kutup op ne wonom a-eh</i>	Straight is my skirt, a-eh

If a man hears a cassowary calling, but is unable to find and kill the animal, it is an omen that a woman will come to his house.

There is a myth that can be considered, to adapt Malinowski's phrase, the charter for the metaphor. The myth depicts the metamorphosis of a woman into a cassowary. It is a part of a secret corpus of myths associated with the *yawat* cult and is not public knowledge. Thus, for men familiar with the myth, a reference to the metaphor equating cassowaries and women evokes an enhanced set of meanings.

The myth is told either independently or in conjunction

with other segments of the sequential yawat cult myths (see Chapter 10). These begin with a story of brother-sister incest. As a result, the brother turns into a pig and eats raw sago from a felled palm; he is caught in a trap and instructs his sister's husband to kill him. The relevant segment of the myth begins when the sister's husband returns to his house for his bow and arrows:

Kaim (the sister's husband) was hungry, so he called to his wife through the partition, telling her to cook him sago. From the other side of the partition, Kaim heard a cassowary calling: *weh, weh, weh*. When he looked through the opening, he saw a cassowary sitting beside the hearth where his wife usually sat.

His wife had become a cassowary. She took the stout posts that stood beside the hearth for her legs. She took the cane wrapped around the posts for her quills. She took a sago bark platter for her casque and a pair of cooking tongs for her beak. Her reed skirt became feathers and she spread black ashes over her body.

Kaim reached out to grab the cassowary by the beak, saying,

*Wamoyi wamoyap, up murit...*  
cassowary waruk name, your beak...

but she eluded his grasp and fled.

Like other Yonggom myths in which people become animals, the dynamic in the story is the breach in social relations that results from unrequited reciprocity. The incest violates the reciprocal relationship between the brother and his brother-in-law. The sister's refusal to give her husband sago, notable as sago is the archetypal vehicle for reciprocity, repeats the previous failure to reciprocate.

The result of the two instances of unrequited reciprocity is that the woman becomes a cassowary.

The myth also depicts the symbolic construction of the cassowary. While men and women each have their own hearths and may cook their own food, a woman spends much of her time beside her hearth, preparing food for family members and guests. The typical pose of a woman when cooking is leaning against the cane tied between the posts that stand in each corner of the hearth, a pair of cooking tongs in one hand, busily transferring cooked sago and bananas from the fire to a sago bark platter. Thus the cassowary is constructed from objects that are predominantly associated with women and the hearth.

#### **Cassowary Metaphor and Magic**

The words *wamoyi wamoyap* are a magic name, or *waruk*, for the cassowary. A *waruk* is a powerful, usually secret name for an animal, plant, or object. Someone who knows the name *wamoyi wamoyap* may say it out loud before going hunting. The *waruk* may enable him to shoot a cassowary, or it may result in a woman coming to his house. The two possible outcomes are linked by the metaphor between women and cassowaries. Another hunting *waruk* for the cassowary is *yeri yeri yeri kon*. If women hear this phrase, they may become ill.

Certain magical stones known as *komon* have power associated with cassowaries. A *komon* is an odd-shaped rock, fossil, or piece of bone with magical power. Schoorl (n.d.) reports that women use stones called *diap komon*, or cassowary *komon*, to catch small fish and prawns from a creek. The Yonggom say that a cassowary wades through streams and stands in pools, attracting fish and prawns to the insects that live in its feathers. When it leaves the water, it shakes itself dry like a dog. The small fish and prawns caught in its feathers are thrown to the ground and eaten.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, women who use *diap komon* enter the water and small fish and prawns are caught in the fibers of their skirts like the cassowary's feathers. When they return to dry land, they shake out their skirts and gather the small fish and prawns. Another example of *diap komon* is a fossilized shell said to attract cassowaries because it resembles the casque (*ambonggarat*) of a cassowary (see Drawing 3). If a woman were to touch this stone, it would no longer be effective. Furthermore, the owner of the stone must abstain from sexual intercourse the night before hunting.

These techniques correspond to classic anthropological types of magic. The cassowary *waruk* involve the use of secret names to compel responses in the natural world. One

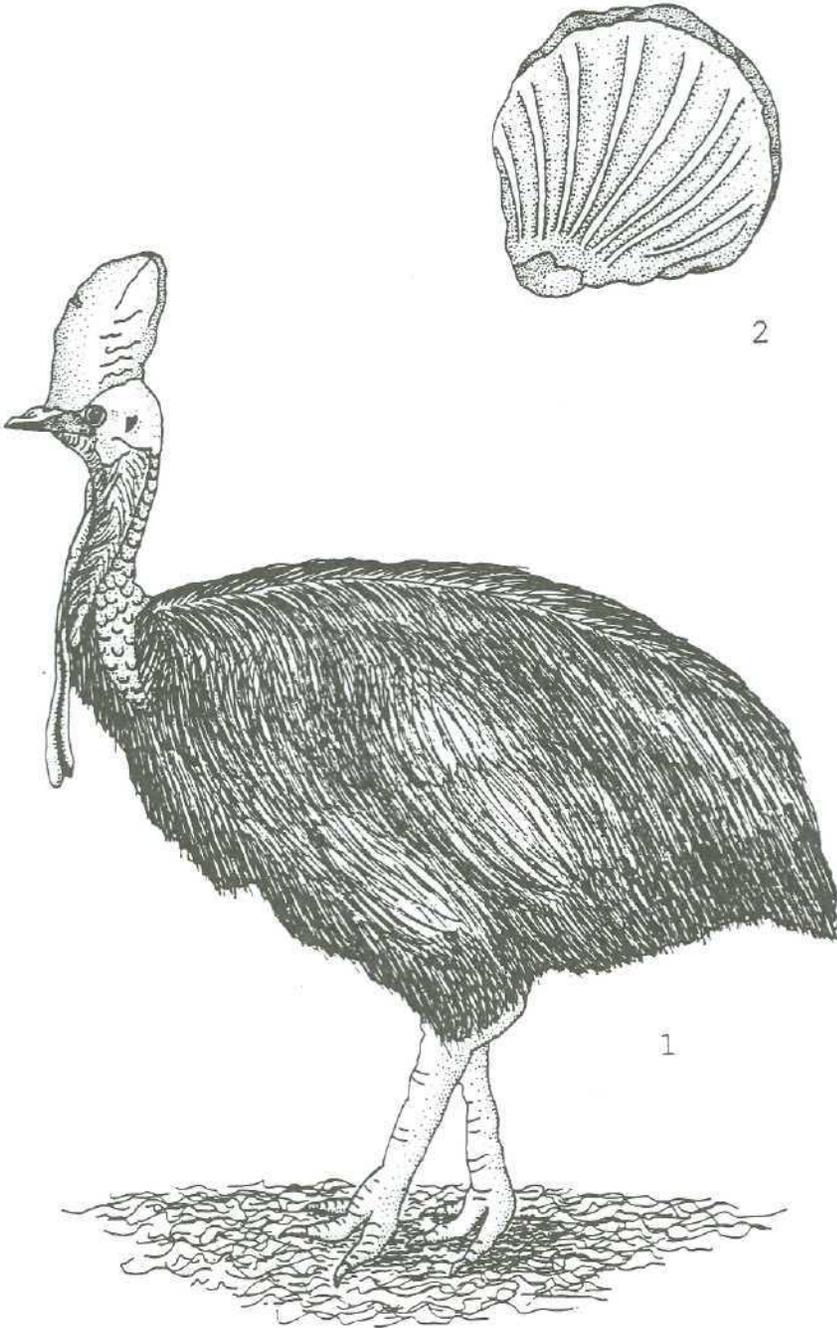
---

<sup>5</sup>Gardner (1984) notes that the Mianmin make a similar claim about cassowaries.

cassowary *komon* relies on the efficacy of symbolic enactments, while the other invokes a principle that links similarity with contiguity. While these principles of magic have acquired a measure of explanatory power by virtue of anthropological convention (cf: Lewis 1988), it is the metaphor between cassowaries and women that is the key to Yonggom magic involving cassowaries. The conventionalization of the metaphor gives such magic its "look of familiarity."

In the following section of this chapter, I discuss several mythological creatures that are half-man and half-animal. These beings are closely associated with particular magical powers. I compare these mythological beings to their counterparts in nature in order to clarify the relationship between magical metaphor and knowledge about nature.

**Drawing 3: Cassowary and Cassowary Magic Stone (*Diap Komon*)**



**Labels for Drawing 3**

1. Southern Cassowary (Casuarius casuarius). (Note the high, narrow casque).
  
2. Cassowary magic stone (*diap komon*). Gift from Soter Kambayang, Yeremot clan, Dome Village (originally from Yeremot village, Irian Jaya).

### Myth, Magic, and Nature

The *dobonggon*<sup>6</sup> has the upper body of a man and the lower body of a cassowary; it lives in the rain forest. The *okwet* is half-man and half-crocodile; it lives in the rivers and swamps. Like Pan, the half-human, half-goat of Greek mythology, or the mermaid of sailors' lore, these beings are recognized as different from other animals. I wish to examine the relationship between these mythological beings and their natural counterparts, the cassowary and the crocodile. Let me begin with a brief discussion of Yonggom ethnozoology.

In classifying the animals of the rain forest, the Yonggom pay attention to morphological features, including reproductive physiology, as well as behavioral characteristics. Animals are known as *onambaya*. The larger animals are divided into two classes, those that bear live offspring, or *manawat*, and those that lay eggs, or *wiiniwat*.<sup>7</sup> The smaller animals (or lower orders) are divided into a large number of primary classes. The number of species within each class varies; for instance, there are more than a dozen names for different grasshoppers, but no specific names for moths or butterflies.

---

<sup>6</sup>Schoorl (n.d.) reports that the people of Kawangtet refer to the half-man, half-cassowary as *keroway*.

<sup>7</sup>Since *wiini* means egg and *wat* means life, *wiiniwat* are egg-laying animals. (*Wiiniwat* is also the name for the uterus). Since *mana* refers to offspring, *manawat* are animals that give birth to live young.

Among the egg-laying animals is the class *on*, which includes birds, fish, and bats. Cassowaries are classified along with the other egg-laying animals but are not considered *on*. The other egg-laying animals are the reptiles and amphibians.

The animals that give birth to live offspring also have breasts (*muk*) and produce milk (also *muk*). Among these animals are the marsupials, known collectively as *ba*, as well as pigs, dogs, and people. Immature offspring of all animals are called *bongbongmana*, while human young are called *danamana*.<sup>8</sup>

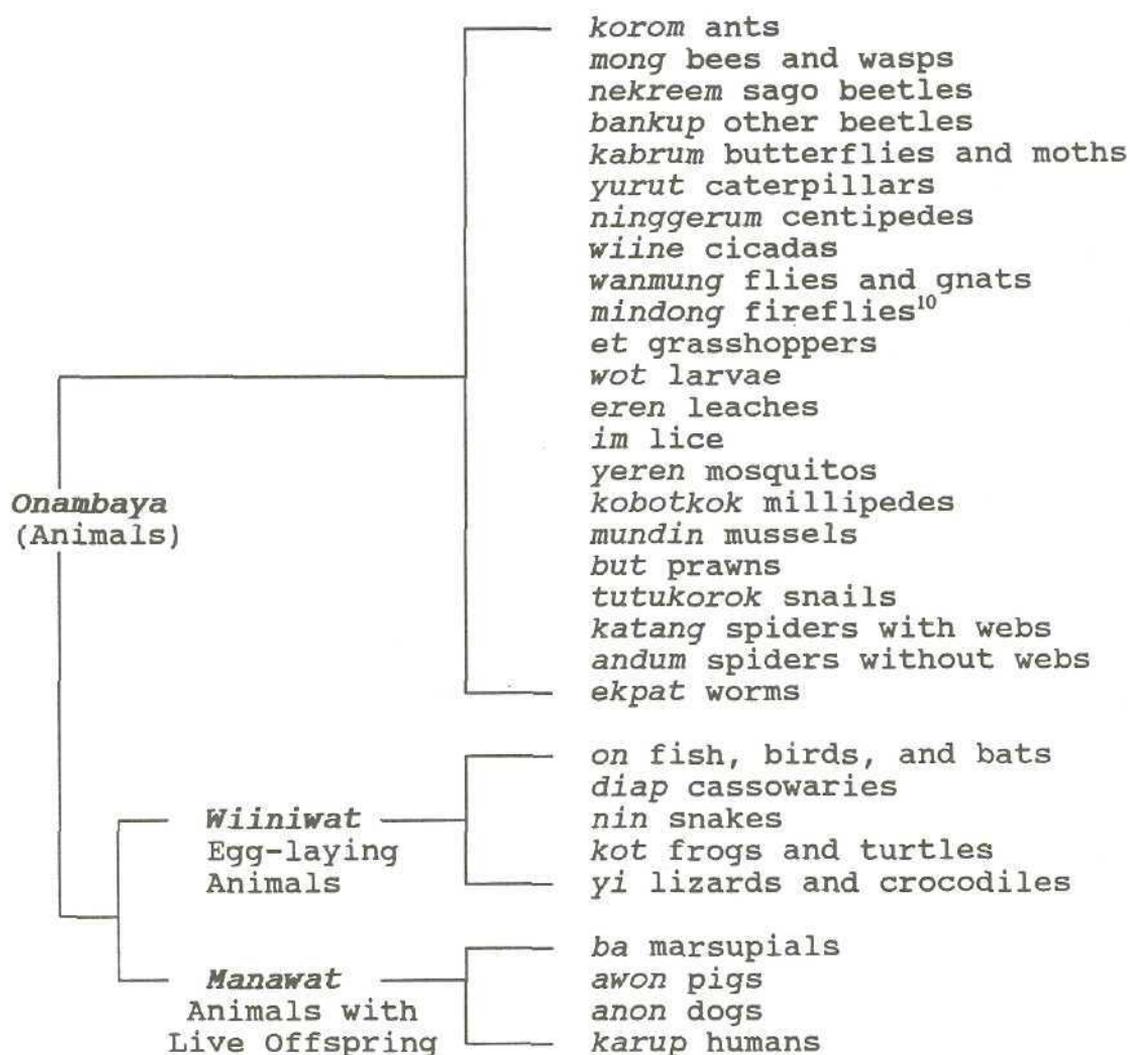
This system of classification has several notable features. Bats are members of the class of egg-laying animals (*wiiniwat*) even though the Yonggom recognize that they are not egg-layers. The ability to move freely through the air like birds (as fish move freely through the water), seems to be a more important criteria than reproductive physiology. This corresponds with the classification of the cassowary, which can not fly, among the egg-laying animals as a whole, but not with the other birds as *on*.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>*Dana* means child or children; *mana* means offspring.

<sup>9</sup>According to Feld (1986), the Kaluli classify cassowaries as birds because their chicks produce a bird-like whistle, while bats are not considered birds because they do not make sounds like other birds. As the Yonggom category *on* includes both birds and fish, sound is not an important criterion for zoological classification.

Figure 2: Yonggom Zoological Classification



<sup>10</sup>Mindong also means star.

Another interesting feature of Yonggom classification is that larvae are considered an independent class rather than a phase in ontogeny, even though the Yonggom understand their developmental cycle. This may have a practical explanation, since beetle larvae (sago grubs) are an important foodstuff, whereas the beetles into which they metamorphose are not eaten.<sup>11</sup> Turtles are classified together with frogs, perhaps because of their shared aquatic existence, rather than with other reptiles with whom they share the feature of laying eggs on land.

The system of classification represents a considerable store of accurate zoological knowledge. The seemingly anomalous features are generally acknowledged and are akin to the Linnean dilemma in classifying animals such as the platypus or the pangolin. Any system of biological classification involves certain compromises, with the end result that not all species are accounted for in an equally consistent fashion.

Does this system of ethnozoological classification include either the *dobonggon*, the half-man, half-cassowary, or *okwet*, the half-man, half crocodile? Neither creature was mentioned when I asked informants for lists of animal names. When I asked directly about the *dobonggon*, I received conflicting answers. Some people suggested that it

---

<sup>11</sup>May (1984) identifies the beetle whose larvae are eaten as sago grubs as Rhyncosphorus Ferringinus papuansus.

was a kind of cassowary. Other people said that even though it has the legs of a cassowary, it is human. I was also told that the *dobonggon* is a person with magical power to change into animals or imitate them.<sup>12</sup> Many of the people that I spoke to about the *dobonggon* were not sure which of these explanations was correct.

The significance of the *dobonggon* lies in its association with hunting. It is said to carry a short hunting bow and arrows. Kutem told me how it can help someone to hunt:

Sometimes the *dobonggon* comes around in the evening, perhaps to the place where you shot an animal. He will introduce himself. He may call himself Ewon. Later you can talk to him while you are in your house and he will knock in response. When you talk to him, you decide where to go hunting the next day. At dawn you wake up and go. If you see his footprints, then you follow them. Ewon may shoot a pig or a cassowary, and then he will ask for one of your arrows. He will poke your arrow into the animal and then it is yours to take away.

If, however, you shoot an animal that Ewon wanted for himself, he will turn around and shoot you with one of his arrows. You will become very sick. In order to recover, you must heat an arrow shaft over the fire and poke yourself where Ewon speared you.

Only a few people have a relationship with a *dobonggon* and they will not speak about it, for if they do, it will no longer help them to hunt. Only those who have hunted with a *dobonggon* in the past but no longer do so, will speak about their experiences with the *dobonggon*.

---

<sup>12</sup>This type of power is called *komon komon* and is discussed in Chapter 9.

A man who has a relationship with a *dobonggon* will have great success in hunting and will become well known for his hunting prowess. The outcome of such a relationship is thus similar to having a *dinggan komon* hunting stone or knowing a *waruk* spell for hunting. A relationship with a *dobonggon* is thus like a power for hunting.

Why should the *dobonggon* take the form of the half-cassowary? One possible answer is that the cassowary is able to travel long distances quickly and tirelessly, qualities that a hunter would do well to possess. More generally, the qualities that make the cassowary difficult to hunt would also make the animal a valuable ally. The main reason that the *dobonggon* takes the form of the cassowary, however, is that the cassowary is an ideal human counterpart.

When I asked people whether the *okwet* was an animal or a person, I received conflicting answers, much like when I asked about *dobonggon*. They were uncertain whether *okwet* is a person, an animal, or a person with the magical power to turn into a crocodile.

*Okwet* are said to attend the underwater feasts known as *ok arat*, which are sponsored by crocodiles and attended by knowledgeable senior men (see Chapter Six). An *okwet* by the name of *Okwet Kawet* is said to build the feast complex for *ok arat*. The relationship between the *okwet* and *arat* is based on a metaphor linking flooding rivers and visitors;

one meaning of a dream in which a river is flooding is that people are coming to visit, like people coming for a feast.

It is said that the *okwet* can be seen when the rivers are flooding. The water surrounding an *okwet* is described as teeming with fish. Much as the *dobonggon* is associated with hunting power, the *okwet* and fishing are closely related.

The clans who own the land on the west bank of the Ok Tedi River are said to be the most knowledgeable about the *okwet*:

These men go with *okwet* to catch fish. The water itself stops; both sides of the river still flow, but it is dry in the middle. The men who know *okwet* go down and collect the fish from the middle of the river.

Knowledge of the *okwet* is thus like a *komon* object or a *waruk* spell for fishing. Why should the *okwet* take the form of the crocodile? One potential answer, given the association of the *okwet* with fishing power, is the crocodile's appetite for fish. As in the case of the *dobonggon*, however, it is in the relationship between the crocodile and man that the best answer is found. Crocodiles are not only the largest riverine animals, but the closest in size to humans. In addition, as a predatory animal, the crocodile dominates the riverine world like a man dominates the rain forest.

The crocodile also occupies a somewhat ambiguous place vis-à-vis the dichotomy between the rain forest and the river (see Chapter Seven). Whereas crocodiles live in the

water but walk on land, men live on land but also swim in the water. That both men and crocodiles blur the boundaries between the river and the forest makes the crocodile an ideal "metaphorical cognate" for man.

Unlike the cassowary, which can only be seen only fleetingly in the wild, crocodiles are often seen in repose, basking on a sandbank. As a result of the crocodile's territorial presence, it is often anthropomorphosized as a guardian of river junctions. The reason *okwet* takes the form of the crocodile is that the animal is an ideal riverine counterpart of man.

Furthermore, the crocodile is also a **male** counterpart. A crocodile is said to be able to make a woman pregnant, though she will give birth to a spirit child (*awat dana*). The *kubup* food taboo placed on the crocodile during *yawat* cult ceremony is also one of the last such taboos to be lifted, reflecting its gender as male.

There is also a recent mythological innovation worthy of mention. When I was learning about birds from the Yonggom, they were able to identify in a book the color illustrations of the birds we discussed.<sup>13</sup> There was one bird, *on awok*, for which we could not find an illustration. I was told that *on awok* was similar to the greater and

---

<sup>13</sup>Birds of New Guinea (Beehler et al. 1986).

raggiana birds of paradise that the Yonggom call *ono*.<sup>14</sup> Oddly enough, no one from the village had actually seen *on awok*, although many said that they had heard it calling at night. Eventually someone pointed out to me that the bird depicted on Papua New Guinea currency is *on awok*. The reason for this identification was that the bird depicted on the money is supposed to be a raggiana bird of paradise, but its tail feathers are incorrectly displayed like the fan of a peacock. This error stands out because the other animals displayed on Papua New Guinea currency are far more accurately portrayed. As a result, the Yonggom say that the image on the currency is not that of the raggiana bird of paradise but another bird, one they had not seen, *on awok*.

Some of the Yonggom refugees, however, claim to have seen *on awok* in Irian Jaya. Kobarara, a refugee from Kawangtet, told me a myth in which men with animal names were dividing up a number of tasks among themselves. A man named On Awok said, "I'll be the one to make *od* (cowrie shell valuables and money) and *da* (stone axes)," and then he went to Mt. Koriom in Irian Jaya. The man On Awok then became the bird *on awok*. The metaphor is straightforward: the bird is associated with the currency on which its picture is displayed; its *raison d'être* in the myth is also

---

<sup>14</sup>The birds are probably conspecific in this region (Beehler, et al. 1986:232. Paradisaea raggiana has red, ruddy plumage in contrast to the yellow-orange tail feathers of Paradisaea apoda, the greater bird of paradise.

the creation of money or valuables. *On awok* is thus linked to the attempt to acquire money, like the *dobonggon* is associated with hunting and *okwet* with fishing.

### Conclusions

Earlier in this chapter, I raised the question of the relationship between the *dobonggon* and the *okwet* and their counterparts in nature. Although both the *dobonggon* and the *okwet* are sometimes spoken of as if they were animals, they are not classified together with the other animals of the rain forest and rivers. This suggests that the mythological beings are outside the normal range of animals known to the Yonggom.

As part-cassowary and part-crocodile, these creatures are ideally suited as counterparts to humans. And as part-human, they are able to participate in relations with people. Through the metaphorical supplementation of their natural images as human counterparts, the *dobonggon* and the *okwet* are considered capable of making magical contributions to success in hunting and fishing.

At this point in the discussion of Yonggom magic, I am able to make several preliminary statements. Yonggom magic is based on metaphors which supplement natural images. The "look of familiarity" of magic lies in the conventionalization of these metaphors. In addition, given the uncertainty in defining the *dobonggon* and the *okwet*, Yonggom

magic seems to be associated with a measure of indeterminacy. In the next chapter, I will consider these provisional statements about Yonggom magic in greater detail.

## Chapter Eight: Techniques and Effects of Yonggom Magic

When you use waruk, you must say words like anti amta.

-- Johannis Ketao

### Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the two most common kinds of Yonggom magic and describe the characteristics that they share. These magical objects (*komon*) and words (*waruk*) are marked as separate from nature and possess features which are indeterminate or unintelligible. Thus while drawing on conventional metaphors for their "familiar look," Yonggom magic makes use of unconventional objects and words to accomplish its intended effects. This corresponds to the preliminary conclusions of Chapter Seven.

In the second half of this chapter, I examine another kind of magic spell (also known as *waruk*) that does not share these properties and operates according to an independent set of rhetorical and grammatical strategies. These differences in character of different kinds of magic suggests the inappropriateness of trying to define Yonggom magic in terms of the techniques employed. I conclude the chapter by arguing that Yonggom magic may best be defined in terms of the quality of the effects that it is intended to achieve.

### The Magical Power of Objects

Among the Yonggom, certain odd stones, bones, and fossils are considered to have magical power. Known collectively as *komon*, these objects are subdivided into different types according to their powers. One type of *komon* is *dinggan komon*, which is used for hunting game animals. Another type of *komon* is *witkon*, which protects its owner from harm.

One afternoon when Kutem's wife and children were in the family gardens, Kutem invited me into his house to show me his *komon* stone:

He carefully withdrew a wrapped bundle from the string bag that he carries with him when hunting. He unwound several strips of bark and cloth, revealing a shiny black object that looked and felt like a fossilized vertebrae. Kutem calls the stone *wet kongkono* because it looks like a vertebrae (*kongkono*) of a pig, although he insists that it is not. Kutem bought the stone at an *arat* pig feast on the advice of his father.

Early in the morning before a hunting expedition, Kutem takes the stone from its bag and blows on it. He uses it when hunting for wild pigs (*awon kiip*). The first time he used the *wet kongkono*, he saw nearly twenty wild pigs in one place and shot three of them. He attributes his success in hunting to the stone and plans to give it to his son when he is old enough to hunt.

When I pressed Kutem for details about how *dinggan komon* work, he says that his stone "calls out" to pigs, which come near so that he can shoot them.

Other men in the village have similar magical stones for hunting. Soter invited me into his house after I expressed interest in seeing the *komon* stones he used when hunting:

Soter owned two *komon* stones. One was a cassowary *komon* [described in Chapter Seven]. The other hunting

stone was a small piece of fossilized bone. It works like the cassowary *komon* except that it attracts pigs.

Schoorl (n.d.) describes a number of other odd-shaped stones to which special abilities were ascribed. Stones with unusual triangular shape, known as *Komot yanok* or *kewon*, are said to be the fingernails or toenails of *Komot*, the mythical first man and trickster figure (see Chapter Five). Looking at or blowing on these stones is said to produce good hunting results. Other magical stones are known as *tonwiini*, which means "fish eggs." One rubs these stones together before going fishing. The stone *niwiini*, which means "snake eggs," is used for catching snakes; other stones used for the same purpose are called *nin komon*. The stone *ondimin* is used for catching fish.

Another class of stones for hunting is *nambat wegono*, which literally means "lightning penis." To find a one of these stones, one must search for a blackened pebble where lightning has struck. This is fed to a dog with the meat of an animal the dog has killed. Thereafter, when the dog barks when hunting, the animals that it is chasing will not run away.

Schoorl (n.d.) also described *komon* stones used in agriculture. Round or oblong stones called *kunimkun* are buried in gardens in order to produce a good harvest. Once buried, the stones are said to move around underground and thus cannot be retrieved and used again. The stones are purchased from people in the mountains. There is a myth

about a cannibal woman whose bones were broken up into pieces and buried in the gardens, which enabled the land to stay fertile without a fallow period.

All Yonggom magic has the ability to cause illness. If the owner of a *komon* hunting stone does not go hunting for a long time, the stone may effect his health, which is why many owners of these valuable objects have discarded them. Dako, for instance, told me that he threw his hunting stone into a ravine when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Waruk magical spells may inadvertently cause others to become sick, and these ill-effects must be "redirected" by their owners (see Chapter 4).

Another kind of magical object, called *witkon*, has protective power and is referred to in English by the Yonggom as a "bodyguard." A *witkon* will keep arrows or bullets from hitting their target; similarly, a blow from a stone club or machete will miss its mark. Nonggong, a refugee from Kawangtet village in Irian Jaya, showed me his *witkon*:

Nonggong removed a smooth, coffee-colored stone from the small string bag that he wore around his neck. He calls it *wetwot*. Its shape and color were unlike that of stones found beside local rivers; Nonggong said that it came from Mount Koriom. He said the stone kept him from harm.

Another refugee, Kukweng from Ninati village in Irian Jaya, tried to sell me his *witkon* in order settle some debts:

It was a glossy black stone, roughly cylindrical in shape. There was a small seam or indenture running across the stone at an angle. Within the crevice were

fossilized remains of several shells. This feature, which Kukweng could not identify, made the stone a *witkon*.

Kukweng told me that the *witkon* protects him. An arrow shot at him will miss its mark. If a *kumka* assault sorcerer were to attempt to grab him, he would slide out of his grasp. The stone also protected him when he was fleeing from the Indonesians.

Kukweng says the stone was purchased a long time ago from a man named Waiyuap who lived near Katumbon, the source of the Kao River.

Another way to acquire a *witkon* is to take a bone from the body of a deceased male infant. A few days after the burial, one should seek the mother's permission, give her some *od* cowrie shells or money in compensation, and then exhume the corpse.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively, one can ask the mother to cut off one of the boy's fingers. The bone should be left to dry in the sun or over a fire. Afterwards, one can either burn the bone in a fire and rub the ashes onto one's arms and legs, or keep the bone wrapped up like any other *komon*. Thereafter, the child's spirit will protect whoever keeps the finger.

In the same string bag as his *witkon* from Koriom, Nonggong keeps a piece of bone given to him by Dako, who explained how he acquired it:

The bone was from an infant who died at the mission hospital at Runginae. Dako was with another Yonggom man who was receiving medical treatment at the hospital. After the child died and was buried, the two men went into the graveyard at night and dug up the grave. They split open the cloth covering the boy's body and called out to the child's spirit (*awat*), "Come

---

<sup>1</sup>Even before Australian government regulations about burials, an infant's corpse would be directly interred rather than set on an exposure platform to decompose.

and protect us, go with us, and help us." "If you will do this, then come out." Even though the body had not decomposed, the bones were protruding through the skin. Each man took one scapula. After they took the bones, they did not wash or bathe for a month; they kept their skin clean by rubbing themselves with rough leaves. They did not tell the mother of the child (who was not Yonggom) out of fear that she would report them to the police.

Dako kept the bone for many years. The spirit (*awat*) of the child used to come to him in his dreams, calling, "Oh, Uncle, I am hungry, put some meat for me on the shelf above the fire." Dako would leave out small pieces of food for the child's spirit. After Nonggong came to Papua New Guinea as a refugee, Dako felt sorry for him, so he gave him the bone for protection. The bone protects him from arrows or bullets; it can also stop him from being gored if he is attacked by wild pigs.

To summarize, two types of power are attributed to *komon*. *Dinggan komon* and *nambat wegono* have power for hunting, and *witkon* has protective power. As to the reason why one stone has protective power and another has hunting power, I never received a satisfactory answer. All *komon*, however, do have several properties in common. They are odd-shaped and either unique or relatively uncommon. Each has features that are not understood, such as fossilization, or an unusual source, such as lightning or a corpse. *Komon* magical objects thus have a quality of indeterminacy.

#### **The Magical Power of Words**

One may compare *komon* magical objects to *waruk* magical spells. The two are wholly independent of each other; there are no words necessary to invoke the powers of *komon*, nor are there any material objects associated with *waruk*.

There are *waruk* for many purposes, ranging from hunting, to travelling quickly through the tangled underbrush of the rain forest, to properly constructing the steps of a house. Many *waruk* are based on the *waruk* name of animals or objects, such as the *waruk* of an animal one hopes to shoot, or of the forest undergrowth, or of steps to a house.

Most *waruk* are used in hunting; they are known as *dinggan waruk*.<sup>2</sup> A hunter whispers the spell before going off to hunt. A hunting spell can be as simple as the words, "*kowiit op*," a *waruk* for hunting a black pig, or "*yeri yeri kon*," a *waruk* for hunting cassowaries. Calling an animal's *waruk* name is said to encourage it to approach.

A single *waruk* may also be applicable to a number of species, such as the following fishing spell:

---

<sup>2</sup>*Dinggan* are game animals.

<i>Ep</i> ambot aranu	You are ambot aranu <sup>3</sup>
<i>On kirup kup</i> ambot aranu	Catfish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On aawat ep</i> ambot aranu	Eel, you are ambot aranu
<i>On dutkum kup</i> ambot aranu	Dutkum fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On weti ep</i> ambot aranu	Weti fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On anggi kup</i> ambot aranu	Anggi fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On ya kup</i> ambot aranu	Ya fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On kom kup</i> ambot aranu	Kom fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On biwin ep</i> ambot aranu	Barramundi, you are ambot aranu
<i>On anggat ep</i> ambot aranu	Anggat fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On watum ep</i> ambot aranu	Watum fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On kimyat kup</i> ambot aranu	Kimyat fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On yuk ep</i> ambot aranu	Yuk fish, you are ambot aranu
<i>On yip, ku ne doberan ki</i>	All of you fish, I am waiting
<i>Kirot, yaro minime!</i>	Quickly, you must come!
<i>Minip kop</i>	All of you come
<i>Monbe, monbore</i> <sup>4</sup>	Shoot, you will shoot
<i>De ambioom wana</i>	Then go home

Some waruk invoke broader forces in order to achieve their aim, as in the following waruk for pig-hunting,

<i>Upun dumbonop</i>	ground waruk
<i>Wiwot kawarot</i>	cloud waruk

In using this waruk, the hunter should pick up some earth between his toes while saying the first line. After the speaking the second line of the spell, the hunter snaps his fingers. The waruk is said to cause the clouds to "close the path" of the pigs, so that they cannot escape from the hunter's arrows. Many waruk incorporate such actions. Other examples are the forced exhaling of breath, grasping a sapling, and moving a hunting bow in a scooping motion. Not all waruk are accompanied by actions, and it was never said

---

<sup>3</sup>*Ep* or *kep* is third person singular masculine; *up* or *kup* is the feminine.

<sup>4</sup>*Monbe* is the same as the present tense *monbep*, you shoot. *Monbore* is the same as the future tense *monborep*, you will shoot.

to me that the actions were necessary to make spells effective.

Waruk names such as *digon dagon*, *koyurun kayurun*, *wiwin urunun*, and *worumop dorumop* have a rhyming, singsong character that makes them easily recognizable as not being part of ordinary speech.<sup>5</sup> Like the *banggom* verse about birds diving into the river (see Chapter 6), waruk are based on sound rather than meaning. Lewis (1980:59) has described the "sense-but-nonsense, jabberwocky quality" of ritual language among the Gnaou, a Sepik River people. Yonggom waruk, however, do not seem to be based on words from neighboring languages or trade languages, as Lewis suggests is the case for Gnaou ritual language. If jabberwocky is word play, waruk is sound play. The words used in waruk have no intrinsic meaning.

#### **Other Uses of Waruk Names**

Waruk names are also used in Yonggom myths, in certain hunting songs, and in the yawat male cult. In myths, the names of certain characters are also waruk names. In one myth, the names of two sisters who become cicadas are Boromkon and Yimitkon, which are also waruk. Other myths begin with the presentation of a sequence of waruk names, such as a myth told to me by Kobarara,

---

<sup>5</sup>These are the waruk names for darkness, rain, the forest undergrowth, the ground, and female dogs.

The names of the ground are *kirimonon*, *ambomonun*, and *kurumonun*. The surface of the ground is called *marumgon* and *boromgon*. The name for darkness is *digon dagon*...

In another myth, a song giving instructions to Komot, the primal man and trickster figure, is also used as a hunting *waruk*:

<i>Komot-eh demyamo<sup>6</sup> monbe</i>	Komot, shoot straight to the heart
<i>Komot-eh Komot-eh Komot-eh</i>	Komot-eh, Komot-eh, Komot-eh
<i>Demyamo monbe, Komot-eh</i>	Shoot straight to the heart, Komot

Even though the myth refers to Komot shooting a cassowary, as a *waruk* the verse is used for hunting Guria pigeons (*on kurim*). Why should this be the case? The answer is in another myth that accounts for the inability of the cassowary to fly. In that myth, a guria pigeon fell from its perch after being tricked by its sister. The fall broke its wing and the bird became a cassowary. Thus the *waruk* for hunting guria pigeons comes from one myth but is accounted for by another.

Many of the songs from *banggom* call-and-response song ceremonies, held while waiting for meat from a hunt to cook, are also used as *waruk*. This *banggom* song about the bird on *kam* is also used as a *waruk* when hunting for the bird:

---

<sup>6</sup>*Demyamo* literally means "into the hole," but refers to aiming for the heart.

*Kwiman kurinae, Kwiman kurinae*  
*Kwiman yak-yak*  
*Kwiman Kurinae, Kwiman kurinae*  
*Oye-oye*

Other waruk are part of the yawat male cult (see Chapter Ten). In yawat songs, certain objects are referred to by special names, such as *denggane murane* for fire or *umgat wonggat* for the ground. These names can also be used as waruk. In general, yawat is the source of many waruk:

Some Yonggom say that a waruk should only be used by one person. Thus Kibinok, an older man but still an active hunter, refused to tell his adult son Bagim any of his waruk. Frustrated by his inability to acquire waruk for hunting, Bagim brought a pen and paper to the yawat cult ceremony that I sponsored in order to record waruk names and use them later when hunting.

*Kubup* food taboos associated with yawat are lifted only after saying the appropriate *kubup* spell. Some of the words used in these *kubup* spells are also used as waruk.

Not only do waruk appear in myths, *banggom* songs, and the yawat cult, but they are derived from these contexts.

Other waruk are said to come from dreams:

Kati dreamed of the waruk names for dogs. *Kaing Kaingyap* is for male dogs; *Worumop Dorumop* is for female dogs. He uses these waruk when hunting.

A single waruk may also be used in a number of different contexts. For example, I recorded a *banggom* song that had been revealed in a dream, which was also used as a waruk for hunting pigs. Waruk are not words taken from the language the Yonggom speak and understand, but are revealed in dreams, myths, the yawat male cult, and songs.

### **Waruk and Komon Compared**

What do *komon* and the *waruk* that I have discussed thus far have in common? *Waruk* names have an odd, singsong, nonsensical quality that clearly distinguishes them from ordinary speech. They are not considered to be Yonggom words and are revealed in special contexts, including dreams, myth, ritual, and song. Although *komon* objects are found in nature, they have odd features that distinguish them from other objects. Both *waruk* and *komon* share the recognizable quality of being anomalous. To summarize: *waruk* and *komon* possess features that are unintelligible and set them apart. This indeterminacy of meaning seems to give Yonggom magic its power.

Were these the only forms of magic used by the Yonggom, it would be possible to define Yonggom magic in terms of the techniques employed. Not all *waruk*, however, use esoteric language. There are other *waruk* that are composed entirely of ordinary language, but are considered to be equally efficacious.

### **Magic that Uses Ordinary Speech**

Many *waruk* magical spells do not incorporate esoteric vocabulary, but are composed of everyday speech. The desired objectives of these *waruk* is clearly spelled out, which is not usually the case for *waruk* that use esoteric vocabulary.

The following *dinggan waruk* for hunting bush fowl (on *monowan*) is a good example. While standing behind a blind or hunting shelter, waiting for the birds to feed on the ripe fruit fallen from a nearby tree, the hunter quietly says the following words:

<i>Yonon kop; menen kop</i>	In the hunting blind; it is coming
<i>Ayimaip,<sup>7</sup> monowan ku</i>	It is within range, the bush fowl
<i>Yonon kop; menen kop</i>	In the hunting blind; it is coming
<i>Ayimaip</i>	It is within range
<i>Ana bet nup ana bet</i>	With arrows, with our arrows

Hunting birds from a blind requires great patience. A hunter may wait for hours, only to have birds approach but stay just beyond the range of his arrows. The *waruk* describes a scenario in which the bush fowl approaches within range of the blind.

A similar *waruk* is used when hunting *Guria* pigeons:

<i>On kurim</i>	<i>Guria pigeon</i>
<i>Kup ku kirot mene</i>	<i>You come quickly</i>
<i>Menep kop wetmore wana</i>	<i>Come so that you are seen</i>
<i>Ne ku munggi bopman</i>	<i>I am starving to death</i>
<i>Kowe, kwi</i>	<i>So, do it like that</i>

Neither of these *waruk* are formulaic. They rely on ordinary speech. They do, however, share certain grammatical and stylistic features, many of which also appear in *waruk* that employ esoteric *waruk* names, including the fishing *waruk* discussed above. These are the last five lines of that *waruk*:

---

<sup>7</sup>*Ayimaip* is a contraction of *ayimamip*.

<i>On yip, ku ne doberan ki</i>	All of you fish, I am waiting
<i>Kirot, yaro minime!</i>	Quickly, you must come!
<i>Minip kop</i>	All of you come
<i>Monbe, monbore</i>	Shoot, you will shoot
<i>De ambioom wana</i>	Then go home

The grammatical and rhetorical devices employed in these spells follow four general strategies.

The first strategy uses instructions, commands, and persuasion to compel the subject of the *waruk*. Examples from the *waruk* above include the instruction *mene*, or "come," as well as the imperative form of the same verb, *minime!*, or "you must come!" These commands verbalize the speaker's intentions. *Waruk* also use exaggerated claims in the attempt to persuade, such as *ne ku munggi bopman*, or "I am starving (to death)." Similarly, the *waruk* use temporal adverbs, such as *kirot*, or "quickly," which give the *waruk* a sense of urgency. Another example is the use of the verb *doberan*, which means both "standing" and "waiting."

The second strategy uses performative utterances (Tambiah 1973), which have impact by virtue of being spoken (e.g. "I do," in a marriage ceremony). An example of a performative utterance in *waruk* is the phrase, "*kowe, kwi*," or "so, like that," which is similar to the English "so be it."

The third strategy involves generalized reference to efficacy and success, and is similar to Keesing's (1984) interpretation of the Austronesian term "mana." As a noun, *mana* indicates "efficacy" and "success." As a verb, *mana*

means "be efficacious," or "be successful." A common example from Yonggom waruk is the use of the adjective suffix *mamip*, which, like the English "-able" or "-ible," has the implication of capacity, fitness, or worthiness. Thus *ayimamip* is a compound form of the verb *aye*, to hit, strike, or shoot, and the suffix *mamip*; it literally means "possible to shoot" (translated above as "within range"). Use of the suffix *mamip* emphasizes the possibility that the desired outcome will occur. Another example of this strategy is the use of statements about something being visible, e.g. *wetmore wana*, or "can be seen," as opposed to remaining hidden.

The fourth strategy involves linguistic marking of the transition between the present and the future. One example is the shifting of tenses within a phrase, e.g. *monbe monbore*, which means "shoot, you will shoot." Another example is the use of the present tense in referring to future events, e.g. *menen kop*, or "it is coming." Waruk also make reference to events that will take place after the intended act is complete, such as "*nup ana, nup ana bet de ambioom wana*," or "our arrows, with our arrows, and then go home."

All of the strategies refer to the enhancement of conditions for success, rather than attempt to guarantee a specific outcome. Let me illustrate this point with the example of hunting magic. The problem addressed in hunting

magic is how the hunter can find game animals "hidden" in the rain forest. If the animals remain out of sight, the hunter has no opportunity for success. The aim of hunting magic is to bring the animals into view and thus enhance the chance for a successful hunt. The Yonggom term for "hidden" or "unseen" is *akmimamokban*. The adjective is composed of the verb stem *akmi*, "to see," the negative particle *ban*, and the infix *mamok* (the negative form of *mamip*), which indicates a lack of capacity, fitness, or worthiness. *Akmimamokban* is the opposite of *akmimamip*, which means "in sight," or "visible." The intended outcome of many hunting *waruk* is that animals which are *akmimamokban* or "hidden" will become *akmimamip*, or "visible." Thus the aim of magic is not success per se but rather the opportunity for success.

#### **The Adverbial Effects of Yonggom Magic**

A consideration of *waruk* that use ordinary speech suggests that it is not possible to define Yonggom magic in terms of the technique employed. A more appropriate way of defining Yonggom magic may be in terms of the quality of its intended effects.

Yonggom magic is adverbial, by which I mean that it is intended to modify the quality of events rather than to cause them to happen. More specifically, Yonggom magic is intended to influence such attributes as position in place

and time, or quantity, or manner, or degree, or number. Yonggom magic is considered to enhance rather than cause or create.

Let me illustrate this adverbial character with the case of Yonggom rain magic. The Yonggom have no magic for ending a drought by causing rain, nor do they have magic for halting a rainstorm. The only form of rain magic they know is a *waruk* for increasing the intensity of a rainstorm. *Waruk* cannot cause rain to begin or end, but can only modify the character of a rainstorm already in progress.

*Komon* magical stones are similarly adverbial in effect. For example, *witkon* have protective power, but a *witkon* is not expected to stop the attack of a wild pig, or of an assault sorcerer, or of a man seeking revenge. Instead, the *witkon* influences the character or outcome of these events: the pig may attack the man, but it will fail to gore him, or the assault sorcerer will grab his intended victim, but the man will slip from his grasp, or an arrow will be shot by the vengeful man, but it will miss its target. *Komon* magical objects, like *waruk* magical spells, influence the character or outcome of particular events.

Malinowski (1935) argued that in the Trobriand Islands, magic and practical activity are always conjoined. His point was that magic contributes to a successful outcome, and thus is complementary to technology (cf: Tambiah 1968). My argument extends this point of view one step: Yonggom

magic is not intended to cause or create, but to influence events in an adverbial manner, contributing to the generalized opportunity for success.

## Chapter Nine: Yonggom Magic and the Impossible

...man is not a romantic, but a practical... being, even in his magic, and there is no magic to attempt the impossible.

-- E.E. Evans-Pritchard

(1929:638)

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I described different *waruk* and *komon* magical spells and objects and argued that they are similar in terms of the effects they are considered to have. Yonggom magic is adverbial in character, by which I mean that it is intended to modify or enhance, rather than cause or create.

In this chapter, I describe several examples of Yonggom magical objects "for the impossible," which are said to give people the power to assume animal form, to fly, or to become invisible. The indeterminacy surrounding the use of these objects, however, indicates that they may not physically exist. I suggest that magic "for the impossible" is apocryphal and exists only in stories about its use. In the remainder of the chapter, I consider the implications of this point.

### Magic for the Impossible

In the discussion of the mythological beings *dobonggon* and *okwet* (Chapter 7), I referred to a paradox regarding knowledge about their existence: someone who has a relationship with one of these creatures cannot reveal this

fact to others, for then the creature will abrogate the relationship. In other words, the one who knows cannot say.

There are no similar restrictions regarding most *komon* objects, which can be shown to others without affecting their efficacy, or *waruk* magical words and spells, which in any case frequently appear in other contexts. In the case of "magic for the impossible," however, information about the use of such objects is subject to the same limitations as having a relationship to a *dobonggon* or an *okwet*. If the objects are revealed to others, they will lose their efficacy and may even disappear. Even speaking about them can cause them to lose their power.

As a result of these restrictions, someone who possesses such an object would be unwilling to acknowledge this fact. Only a person who claims to have once owned such an object, but then lost it or gave it away, is willing to discuss his personal experiences in using "magic for the impossible." I cannot describe any of these objects, for I have never seen one. Indeed, the restrictions surrounding knowledge about their use raises the question whether such objects physically exist. On occasion, this question is debated among the *Yonggom* themselves.

#### **Assuming Animal Form**

A magical object known as *komon komon* gives its owner the power to assume animal form. The name *komon komon* is

the reduplicated form of *komon*, which signifies either an idealized or an intensified form of the noun. There are different *komon komon* for different animals and different purposes. To eavesdrop on a conversation, one might use *yi toktok komon komon* to become a gecko lizard (*yi toktok*) and listen without being noticed. To cross a river quickly, one might use *yinberek komon komon* to become a crocodile (*yinberek*) and swim the distance underwater. To arrive at a destination quickly or see if one is being pursued, one might use *on kambep komon komon* to become a brahminy kite, and then soar above the forest canopy.

Schoorl (n.d.) described several types of *komon komon* used for hunting, including becoming a snake in order to catch other snakes and becoming a fish in order to catch other fish. *Ayikimoni* are colored stones that enable one to become an iguana and thus easily catch one's prey.

Like other kinds of magic, *komon komon* can cause its owner to become ill. Unlike other illness caused by magic, however, *komon komon* is said to physically embed itself in the owner's body. To cure an illness caused by *komon komon*, it is necessary to have someone with the requisite skills and knowledge remove the object from the patient using one of the techniques described in Chapter Four.

Stories about the use of *komon komon* are common. Members of the political movement Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM), many of whom are Yonggom refugees, are said to

possess crocodile *komon komon*, so that if they are pursued by Indonesian soldiers, they could become crocodiles and cross rivers quickly and safely.<sup>1</sup> Schoorl (n.d.) described how *komon komon* may be used by assault sorcerers in order to become animals, enabling them to stay hidden and ambush their victims, "...usually several people are said to be hiding in this way and when the victim passes by, they make him stumble and take him by surprise." A story I heard told at a sorcery inquest involved the use of *komon komon*. The story was about Kanong, who is the only survivor from among five classificatory brothers, and is sometimes blamed for the deaths of his brothers. This story is about his brother Kowori's death:

Using *komon komon*, Kowori turned into a mangrove monitor (*yi kawa yi*) in order to hunt for crayfish. His brother Kanong saw the lizard, but not realizing that it was a man in the guise of a lizard, he shot and killed it. He brought the lizard back to his house, where he cooked and ate it.

The next morning Kowori turned back into a man.<sup>2</sup> He came to Kanong's house and said to his brother, "What were you doing by the water yesterday?" "Do you think that it was a lizard that you killed and ate?"

The next morning, Kowori died. Kanong had not eaten a lizard, but his brother Kowori.

Even though there are stories about the use of *komon komon* for assuming the form of animals, some people suggest

---

<sup>1</sup>OPM leaders with whom I spoke said that they had given up using these powers.

<sup>2</sup>When I discussed this story with Gabriel, he suggested that it was Kowori's *kinggen* or spirit that confronted Kanong.

that while the powers may exist, no Yonggom people have them. I have been told that only the Ningerum, or only the Awin (Aekyom), or only the people living in the mountains (Min or Mountain Ok) possess *komon komon* powers for assuming the form of animals.

### **Flying through the Rain Forest**

Another type of magical object "for the impossible" is *yirim kat*, which enables its owner to fly through the rain forest. *Yirim kat* is made from the bark (*kat*) of the *yirim* tree, which has long branches that wrap around each other. To use *yirim kat*, it is said that the traveler stands on the piece of bark, the landscape changes, and the destination rapidly approaches. The traveller jumps off and then the bark returns to where the journey began. *Yirim kat* is thus like a magic carpet. No one that I spoke with knew how to make a *yirim kat*. I was told that Wanmut owns one, but I was also told that he could not admit as much, for then it would no longer work.

There is a myth about the primal man and trickster figure Komot (see Chapter Five) and the *yirim kat*. Komot had a *yirim kat* and his nephews the Yoknat were in awe of his ability to travel rapidly from place to place. The Yoknat wanted to know how the *yirim kat* was made, so they badgered their Uncle Komot with questions. He became irritated with them and finally told a Yoknat to kill his

mother and dry her skin over a fire. Once the skin had dried, Komot told the Yoknat, all he needed to do was to stand on top of it, and it would carry him anywhere he wished to go. Of course, like the other myths about the trickster Komot and his nephews the Yoknat, after the Yoknat had killed his mother and failed in his attempt to use her skin as a flying carpet, he realized that he had been misled.

In contrast to myths from which spoken *waruk* are taken, this story describes a kind of magic, but does not make it accessible. No one that I spoke with had stories to tell me about the use of *yirim kat*.

#### **Remaining Unseen**

Another type of magic "for the impossible" is *nonggere atgere*, which enables one to become invisible. When one uses it in the rain forest, passersby are said to be unable to see one through the trees. *Nonggere atgere* literally means "into vine, into tree," because to someone walking by, the user appears as a tree or vine. Its use does not involve magical words, spells, or gestures. It is described as a stone similar in appearance to *komon* magical objects.

The owner of a *nonggere atgere* stone is said to be unafraid of assault sorcerers because he is invisible to them. As with *komon komon*, *nonggere atgere* is said to lose its effectiveness if the stone is spoken about or revealed.

Elias said that Dabuna and Dabung might own *nonggere atgere*, but I never found anyone who admitted to having one in his possession.

In contrast, I did hear stories from people who claimed that they had owned and used *nonggere atgere* in the past. On the afternoon that Kutem showed me his *dinggan waruk* hunting stone, we discussed other types of magical power. Kutem said that in the past he owned a *nonggere atgere* stone, which he used when he did not wish to be seen. Later he discarded the stone. When I asked him whether the stone really worked, he pointed to a scar on his forehead and told me this story:

One day he was walking alone along a path through the rain forest when he heard voices. People were coming, but he did not know who they were. He became afraid that they might try to kill him, so he stepped to one side of the trail and stood in the thick underbrush. He had his *nonggere atgere* stone with him.

The voices belonged to a group of high-spirited young men. Although they came very close to Kutem, they did not see him; all they saw were trees and vines. One of the boys was swinging a machete, hitting the trees lining the path as he walked. The boy swung his machete at a tree trunk, but struck Kutem on the forehead. None of the boys noticed anything amiss and they continued on their way.

When Kutem returned to his house, he noticed the clotted blood from the wound on his forehead and realized that he had been cut by the machete. He became angry and threw away the *nonggere atgere* stone. This is how he got the scar.

It is common to walk through the rain forest swinging a machete or a stick against the trees lining the path. A person with many cuts on his arms and legs may be suspected

of having acquired these injuries while using *nonggere atgere*.

When I spoke about *nonggere atgere* with Elias, he told me a story similar to that told by Kutem:

Elias used to own a *nonggere atgere* stone. One night he clandestinely visited an unmarried woman in her father's house. As he was leaving, he saw the woman's father returning. The father was carrying a burning torch of leaves and damar to guide him through the darkness.

Elias stood quietly beside one of the houseposts. He had the *nonggere atgere* with him; when the father drew close, he did not see Elias standing there. Before climbing the steps and entering the house, however, the father extinguished the torch against what he thought was one of the houseposts. Actually, he had put out his torch against Elias' forehead. Elias became angry and threw his *nonggere atgere* stone into the rain forest. He has a scar from the burn.

The two stories share several features. Both Kutem and Elias point to scars as physical markers or evidence that their stories are true. In each case, the men discarded the *nonggere atgere* stone after its use led to injury, allowing them to tell their stories.

### **Magic and Inference**

The paradox of magic "for the impossible" is that no one who currently makes use of it can reveal this fact. If they did so, the magic would lose its efficacy. The paradox precludes any demonstration that the objects exist, let alone that they are efficacious. If this is the case, what sustains the notion that such magic exists?

Much as the only evidence for the use of sorcery among the Yonggom is based on inference, the use of these types of magic is largely inferred or claimed in retrospect. And much as the Yonggom do not practice sorcery, they also do not make use of any of these magical techniques "for the impossible."

In a more general sense, much of the information known to the Yonggom about the use of any kind of magic is also inferred. Let me illustrate this claim with an example in which one group of people made an inference about the use of magic in order to explain a situation according to their point of view, while another group of people with a different point of view refuted the inference that magic had been used:

As I struggled to learn to speak Yonggom during the initial months of my fieldwork, several people suggested that someone should use *waruk* in order to quickly improve my linguistic competence. While I indicated that any assistance would be welcome, to the best of my knowledge, no one ever followed up on the suggestion. Furthermore, it was not clear to me whether anyone actually knew a *waruk* for learning languages, though it was stated confidently that such magic did exist.

Towards the end of my stay in Dome, I visited a foreign mission worker who had recently moved into the nearby Yonggom village of Yogi. The missionary was trying to learn the local language as well, but his progress was slow. In the meantime, he also had to suffer the indignity of comparisons to the anthropologist downstream, despite my lengthy head start in learning the language.

The villagers from Yogi told him that my linguistic achievements were the result of a *waruk* used by people from Dome village to make me learn the language quickly.

The people in Yogi village who claimed that a waruk had been used were only casual acquaintances. I interacted with them infrequently and only on a relaxed, informal basis. They had low expectations for my language skills and were impressed by what I knew. They assumed that waruk had contributed to my ability to speak and understand their language.

The people from Dome village with whom I interacted on a regular basis, however, were often frustrated by my limited abilities to communicate. Their expectations were much higher and our interactions demanded a level of competence that challenged and frequently exceeded my capabilities.

When I told people in Dome that people from Yogi had said that a waruk had been used to improve my speaking abilities, they uniformly disagreed with this claim. I was told rather sharply, "That could not be the case; waruk work much better than that." Whereas Yogi villagers held my language abilities in high esteem and attributed them to waruk, Dome villagers considered my language skills to be rather limited and certainly not requiring of a magical explanation.

This example illustrates the process by which ideas about magic are transformed into specific claims about the use of magic. It is possible that the initial assertion that waruk had been used was prompted by motives other than the attempt to account for my linguistic competence. But once the assertion was made, and even though no one came forward and claimed to have used magic, one group of people accepted that magic had been used.

Anthropologists have very little knowledge about the use of magic (cf: Lewis 1988). While it is commonly acknowledged that there are far more sorcery accusations than there are cases in which people use sorcery, anthropologists have generally failed to extend this view to

magic. In other words, I suggest that magic may be more of an idea than a practice.<sup>3</sup>

### **Magic and Representation**

Let me return to the stories told by Kutem and Elias about their use of *nonggere atgere*. What is the relationship between their stories and my assertion that magic "for the impossible" does not exist? Since the stories were told to me in the context of discussions about magic, they should not be interpreted in terms of whether they are objectively true or false, but rather in terms of Yonggom representations of magic.

Kopytoff (1981) has argued that the Western contrast between knowledge and belief has peculiar philosophical roots. The problem stems from the tradition of treating both knowledge and belief and as external to the actor. From the other cultural perspectives, however, knowledge may be defined differently. Thus, the Suku of Zaire claim "comprehension" of things that anthropologists have generally considered symbolic, such as the role of ancestors in daily life. Kopytoff also describes how the Suku resist "uncertain opining" regarding circumstances in which

---

<sup>3</sup>This probably accounts for some of the difficulties that anthropologists face in studying magic. Don Tuzin (p.c. 1987) once suggested to me that the study of magic is akin to the Aesop's Fable of belling the cat.

information is unavailable and thus beyond their "comprehension."

Let me illustrate the applicability of Kopytoff's argument for Yonggom epistemology. Once I was discussing with several men the story of a man who had come to see me because he was despondent over the recent death of his father. The father appeared to his son in a dream, telling him that they should meet on the road to the place of the dead, where he would give his son several things, including the magic power to remain unseen. The response of the people with whom I discussed this story was a brusque dismissal of the man's predicament. What was wrong with the story, I was told, was that the father should have told his son about a specific place in which to meet. As one man put it, "We do not know anything about a road to the place of the dead."

Neither the proposition that the dead can appear to the living in a dream and make promises to them, nor the proposition that the dead can give things to the living were challenged or questioned. The possibility that there may be a "road to the place of the dead" was not questioned either. That the grieving son should be foolish enough to wander about in search of this road, however, was considered ridiculous. As the Yonggom "do not know anything" about this road, they have no way to determine whether it exists, let alone where to find it. Much as Kopytoff suggests for

the Suku, Yonggom knowledge includes certain information that anthropologists would ordinarily classify as symbolic, and this is clearly differentiated from knowledge which they consider to be unobtainable.

Sperber (1982) has discussed this issue in other terms. He describes an encounter in the field with an old man who asks him to slay a dragon with a golden heart. Sperber argues that the tale of the dragon is not about knowledge in the sense of facts about the world, but what he calls "cultural representations." Cultural representations are symbolic statements that are neither true nor false, but are nonetheless treated like other propositions. Sperber refers to such representations as "semi-propositional statements," emphasizing that they are accepted without being subject to evaluation. In a sense, these are statements in inverted commas, knowledge sustained by a suspension of disbelief.

To return to the stories told to me by Kutem and Elias, what do they suggest about the use of "magic for the impossible?" The stories should be interpreted not in terms of whether the Yonggom believe in "magic for the impossible" or not, but whether such magic falls within the conventions of Yonggom cultural representation. In telling me these stories, Kutem and Elias chose to illustrate *nonggere atgere* through personal accounts of the use of such magic. Their efforts to do so may be seen as a response to my request that they explain *nonggere atgere*.

### Conclusions

In this chapter, I have suggested that Yonggom magic "for the impossible" is apocryphal. It exists only in terms of inference about its use, and secrecy regarding the possession of such magic limits challenges to these inferences. In the previous chapter, I discussed a number of examples of *komon* magical objects and *waruk* magical words. *Komon* and *waruk* draw on conventionalized metaphors which supplement natural images; these metaphors can also be seen as forms of cultural representation. I also noted that Yonggom magic is based on indeterminacy; *waruk* and *komon*, for example, make use of objects and words that have uncertain form and meaning. Yonggom "magic for the impossible" is based on ambiguity of another kind; it is the very "use" of such magic that is indeterminate.

## Chapter Ten: The Yawat Cult

No one knows all of yawat himself. One man will speak and when he is done, someone else will take his place. The discussion will continue until everyone has finished talking.

-- a Yonggom man

### Introduction

The Yonggom male cult ceremony known as *yawat* involves temporary seclusion, ritual revelation, and restrictive taboos placed upon initiates. These initiates or novices, known as *kaget*, are boys ranging in age from about ten to sixteen years. The rites are usually held in conjunction with *arat* pig feasts (see Chapter 2) and take place in a clearing in the rain forest a short distance from the site of the feast.

The central feature of *yawat* is the dramatic enactment of a myth that serves as a charter for both *yawat* and *arat*. In this myth, the details of which are presented below, the tragic consequences of unrequited reciprocity are revealed and resolved. The ritual recapitulates this resolution through the participation of the novices in a symbolic cannibal feast.

The period of seclusion is limited in duration and various taboos (*kubup*) are applied to the novices. *Kubup* food taboos stress the sociological consequences of manhood by reversing the flow of reciprocity between novices and

senior men, forcing the novices to become meat-givers rather than meat-takers.

Yawat also invokes male and female spirit-beings through the playing of paired, female spirit flutes and the male spirit bullroarer. The referential meanings of these instruments are stripped away as they are revealed as instruments of deception. Even though the gender of the instruments is ritually denied, the theme is repeated in another form when these same cult objects are revealed as having once been used by women.

The cult is also associated with women in another manner. Not only does the term yawat also refer to menstruation (*nima yawat* or "women's yawat"), but yawat and menstruation are linked by the smell of rot and decay that is attributed both to men returning from yawat and to menstruating women. The analogy seems to compare female procreative powers and the yawat cult.

Several weeks or months after the initial yawat ceremony, the novices are brought back into the rain forest for the ceremony known as *kimit bagandi*, which replicates the revelation of the original yawat ceremony. Other sound-producing instruments are demonstrated and then revealed as instruments of deception. Some of the *kubup* food taboos instituted at the first ceremony are lifted.

In describing yawat and *kimit baggandi*, I depart from the conventions of ethnographic representation and present

my own experience of the events. The decision to use first person narration was influenced by the way in which the Yonggom treated my request to attend yawat. The organizers of the ritual insisted that I participate in the ritual (yawat) rather than simply observe. In addition, given that one of the focal points of the cult is the introduction of novices to its secrets, the structure of a first person narrative parallels the organization of the ritual. While I report on my own experiences during yawat, I make no claim that they are equivalent to those of a Yonggom novice. I balance the narrative description of the ritual with information collected during interviews and discussions about yawat. Another source of information is the corpus of myths associated with the cult. In this chapter, I focus on the charter myth of the yawat cult and its ritual enactment, as well as their relation to the problem of unrequited reciprocity. In the next chapter, I consider ideas in yawat concerning sex, gender, and fertility.

#### **Kamberap's Fate: The Charter of the Yawat Male Cult**

Kamberap and his married sister Yumgon went to a small creek to catch fish. They built a dam across the creek and bailed out the water. When they had caught enough fish, they put their catch in Yumgon's string bag and began walking home.

While walking home, Yumgon tripped over a vine. She fell and her skirt opened. When Kamberap saw his sister exposed, he had sex with her. Afterwards they went back to the house and cooked the fish. They ate together and then Kamberap went away to live in the rain forest.

Yumgon was making sago. During the day she pounded and washed the sago fibers. At night Kamberap came and ate from the raw sago. He was eating raw sago like a wild pig.

Yumgon told her husband Kaim that a wild pig was eating the raw sago at the sago-making place. Kaim built a spring snare trap and tied a rope from the trap to the corner of his house. He told Yumgon that when the pig was caught, the rope would shake the house.

That night the house shook, waking Yumgon. In the morning she went to check the trap, but instead of a pig, her brother Kamberap was caught in the trap. "Don't come any closer," he told her. "Go and tell your husband Kaim that a pig was eating sago and is caught in the trap. Tell him to make an arrow and shoot me in the heart," Kamberap continued.

Yumgon returned to the house and told her husband Kaim what she had seen. She told him what Kamberap had said, so he made an arrow and went to the sago-making place. Kaim saw Kamberap in the trap and Kamberap spoke to him, saying, "When you kill me, you must say 'pig' and not 'man,' say 'pig' and not 'man.'"

Kaim did as Kamberap told him and then shot him in the heart. Kamberap, however, continued to speak, giving directions to Kaim, "Take the lower half of my body for an arat pig feast," he told Kaim, and Kaim began to cut Kamberap into pieces.

"My head and arms, they are for the men only," Kamberap continued; "they are for yawat." Kaim hung Kamberap's jawbone and tongue in the fork of a tree, and Kamberap continued to sing the instructions for making yawat.

The other men came together and took Kamberap's head and upper body for yawat. They sang the songs that Kamberap taught them and followed his instructions for yawat. They wrapped Kamberap's body in tree bark and baked it over a fire. The next morning they ate Kamberap's head and upper body.

Knowledge of this myth is restricted to men who have participated in yawat. The myth of Kamberap's fate is a charter for both the yawat male cult and arat pig feasts.

It is also the first of a sequence of episodes, each of which is usually presented independently.

To summarize the myth: a man has an incestuous affair with his married sister. Afterwards he shares a meal with her, but then retreats to live in the rain forest. He begins to forage for food like a wild animal and is caught in a trap at his sister's sago-making place. He gives instructions that his brother-in-law must come and kill him with an arrow and when the brother-in-law arrives he is told not to refer to him as a man. The myth ends with a cannibal feast upon the body of the man who committed incest. I analyze the myth below.

**Myth Enacted: Yawat Ritual**

Yawat is usually held in conjunction with arat pig feasts. Since such feasts attract visitors from a wide area, participation in yawat is regional in scope. This includes the men leading the ceremony as well as novices participating for the first time. Men from other groups, including Ningerum, Mandobo, and Aekyom, may also attend yawat. The initial period of separation lasts several days and may overlap with the beginning of the arat pig feast.

The young boys and adolescent males taking part in yawat for the first time are not given any warning before being led off to the yawat place (*yawatbon*). When they are led off, their houses are marked with red and yellow clay.

It is said that when they are led off into the rain forest, "everything is quiet and the birds cease calling." The sun is said to "darken and cool down." The only sounds that can be heard are the whistling of two flutes of different pitch, blown alternately. The flutes are kept out of sight; all the novices know is the public explanation of the sounds, that they are made by a tall spirit woman with a long sago fiber skirt and a string bag. At some distance from the *yawatbon*, the novices hear the whirring sound of bullroarers being swung. The public explanation of the sounds of the bullroarer is that they are made by a spirit man named *Kanim*.

Several months after I arrived in the area, there was a *yawat* was held in conjunction with an arat pig feast in Kawok village on the Fly River. While I spent several days at the feast, I did not find out that *yawat* was taking place until later. Since there were no opportunities to observe *yawat* the following year, I arranged to sponsor a *yawat* in Dome in 1989:

On the day chosen for *yawat*, I was told to wait inside my house. Although familiar with the myths associated with *yawat*, I had little idea of what to expect from the ritual itself.

Late in the afternoon Kutem and two other men came to my house. We walked across the village and into the rain forest. Several men from the refugee camp, including two other novices, joined us. We went south towards Wuk creek, where an ironwood log had fallen into the water a few weeks before as it was being carried back to the village. We passed a number of *at wim* trees, the resin of which is collected and burned to provide light. We walked beside a grove of immature

black palms, which mark the return of an abandoned garden to forest. Then we turned west, away from the Ok Tedi River and towards Irian Jaya.

I heard the sound of the bullroarer: "wuuuu wuuuu wuuuu wuuuuung," in the distance. Then, more faintly, I heard the alternating notes from the bamboo flutes. We walked faster and I had to keep my eyes on the path. I was sweating. My heart was thumping in my chest and the blood was pounding in my temples. Abruptly we stopped.

The throbbing voice of the bullroarers and the whistling of the flutes were louder here, but the sounds were coming from the top of an incline and I couldn't see anything. Atani, who was to hold (awine) or guide me through yawat, took my arms from behind and led us forward, giving instructions, "keep your head down, don't step on anyone's feet or hands, don't look up, don't talk, don't look around..."

With my head down and my eyes focused on the ground in front of me, I entered an arched passageway of black palm leaves. There was a confusing tangle of arms and legs and leaves and painted skin. A row of men sat on the ground in front me. They were covered in leaves, bark, and ocher. They sat in pairs facing one another, crossing their arms and holding each other's hands, with their legs extended so the soles of one man's feet met those of the other man. They rocked back and forth, blocking my way.

Outside the passageway people beat their chests and noisily exhaled *wuh wuh wuh wuh* like cassowaries. I could hear the flutes clearly and the sounds of the bullroarer seemed to float down from above.

I stood still; I couldn't pass through the entangled limbs. Then the first pair of arms unclenched and I moved forward, stepping carefully in the open space between their feet. The sounds seemed to grow louder. The next pair of arms remained locked together and I stood off-balance between the legs of the first pair of men. When they released their hands, I moved forward another half step until my way was barred by two more arms. I made slow progress through the passageway. Finally I stepped through the last set of arms and legs and stumbled forward.

Before I could look up, another man thrust my head under his left arm. I was face to face with a severed pig's head, leaves stuffed into its bloody nostrils and

a man's Nassa shell headband on its forehead. Sitting astride the pig's head was Kobarara, who called out, pointing to the pig,

*Yiri muru motkom*  
*Yiri muru motkom* (a name)

*Kamberap ye motkono wetme ki*  
 This is Kamberap's mouth, you see it!

The intense sensory and emotional stimulation of the preceding events -- the cacophony of sounds, the threatening warnings, the guiding hands, the passageway crowded with camouflaged and tangled bodies, and the forced, bent-over posture of the initiate as he was led forward -- were brought to bear on this declaration: that the severed pig's head belongs to a man, and not just any man, but to Kamberap. The man astride the pig's head points to Kamberap's mouth, showing the initiate the source of the yawat ritual.

The man holding my arm asked me, *Wenggaiwo?* "Did you understand?" *Eeh*, "yes," I answered, and was led to one side into a shelter where I was reminded to keep my head down. The roof of the shelter swayed back and forth under the weight of a man swinging a bullroarer. Two more bullroarers and a pair of flutes were being played behind the shelter. The other novices followed and we were kept standing with our heads lowered while the passageway was dismantled and the area marked off as *kubup* or taboo. The men seated inside the passageway went into the rain forest. The novices were not allowed to look up until nothing remained of the passageway.

### After the Revelation: Yawat Continued

More than fifty men were present at yawat and they busied themselves with a number of tasks. Some set up the frame on which the pig, wrapped in tree bark (*yok*) and covered with sago and edible greens, would bake over a slow fire through the night. Other men set up a second shelter facing the first, gathered wood for the fire, brought water in bamboo from a nearby catchment basin, and butchered the pig. While the men worked, they sang verses attributed to Kamberap, which provide the instructions for yawat.

*yubere, yubere, yubere*      clear the ground, clear  
*nambip yubere-oh*              clear it for my house, oh!

This verse is about making a clearing so that the shelter for yawat can be built. Using the first person possessive *ne*, the verse is sung as if Kamberap was singing.<sup>1</sup> Another verse is about gathering cane, used to hold together the shelter built for yawat:

*Nong-oh nong kanminime*              cane, bring cane  
*kudem nong*                              cane from *kudem*  
*epdem nong*                              cane from *epdem*  
*nong-i nong-oh nong-eh*              cane cane cane

*Kudem* and *epdem* are place names associated with the first yawat. Another verse is about trimming the canes to make the shelter.

---

<sup>1</sup>Nambip is the contraction of ne ambip.

<i>Yetwandi yera yere yero</i>	cut them, cut cut cut
<i>kudem epdem ya</i>	at <i>kudem</i> , at <i>epdem</i>
<i>yetwandi yera yere yero</i>	cut them, cut cut cut

When small pieces of pig meat were held over the fire to cook, the men sang a verse about cooking tongs:

<i>Danggi danggo dangge</i>	close them, close close
<i>onop-eh</i>	cooking tongs
<i>yibi dangge</i>	close the back
<i>ambom bet dangge</i>	close the front
<i>danggi danggo dangge</i>	close them, close close

While the meat cooked over the fire, the men sang about the sound made by the pig fat cooking in the fire:

<i>Beree ok mo yumyang</i>	the pig fat makes the sound "yumyang"
<i>berree ok mo eh</i>	the pig fat, eh
<i>yumyang-ah</i>	"yumyang"-ah
<i>yumyang-ah</i>	"yumyang"-ah
<i>eh berree ok mo</i>	eh, the pig fat
<i>yumyang-ah</i>	"yumyang"-ah

In the midst of these preparations, Kobarara, the man selected to lead the ceremony, took some of the pig meat and, passing it under his left arm, fed it to the novices, saying:

*Katum Kamberap ep kat wapdan*

Katum Kamberap, you taste his flesh

While lacking the great drama accompanying the revelation that the pig's head is Kamberap, the consumption of the meat

from the yawat pig is the most important act of the novice within the yawat ritual: it is participation in a symbolic cannibal feast.

The words spoken by Kobarara as he passed a piece of meat to me are known as *kubup*; a different *kubup* is recited the first time after yawat that an initiate eats a certain food or participates in certain activities. *Kubup* is similar to the notion of *amop* (Chapter Five), which I gloss as "taboo" or "restricted," but refers specifically to yawat. *Kubup* also has another meaning not associated with yawat: when someone declares himself "*kubup*" it means that people must refrain from touching his belongings and he in turn will not touch anything that he does not own. This special status is the equivalent of withdrawing oneself from society and from established patterns of reciprocity.

Everyone present ate cooked pork and sago and then the bark containing the pig was placed over a low fire to bake. The men settled into the shelters and continued the call-and-response singing that would carry on until daybreak. The songs repeated the instructions at Kamberap gave the men preparing the first yawat. Some verses were composed from ordinary words, while others used the esoteric language of *waruk* magical spells, such as *mire mare*, the *waruk* name for darkness.

During the evening the singing stopped several times; once to chase a small marsupial in the treetops overhead,

once to discuss with whom I was going to share what I learned about yawat, and twice because of hard rain that poured through the shelters, leaving everyone cold and wet. At daybreak the fires under the tree bark were built up and the last verse was sung,

Kawok yaborok-eh (x4)	Kaworok yaborok, the call of the kuni bird
Kamberap ye dinggi anim doan kio	sitting on Kamberap's hand and singing
Kawok yaborok-eh	Kaworok yaborok, the call of the kuni bird

This verse is about the hooded butcherbird, *on kuni*, whose mournful call at dawn reminds one of deceased relatives. Here the bird seems to be a reminder of Kamberap's sacrifice (see below), which made yawat possible.

Once the singing ended, the tree bark was split open and the meat was distributed. At the same time, the flutes were blown and the bullroarers swung. After eating, the novices were given a chance to try the instruments. The grounds were picked clean and everything associated with the ceremony was burned.<sup>2</sup> The area was marked off and will remain *kubup* or taboo until secondary growth obscures the clearing. The men, women, and children of the village were distant and subdued when we returned; no one came out to greet us.

---

<sup>2</sup>Had I not been taking the bullroarers and flutes for collections, they would have been hidden at the site.

Usually the novices (*kaget*) and the senior men supervising *yawat* stay several days at the site before returning to the village.<sup>3</sup> Upon their return, one house in the village is selected as the *kaget ambip* (novice house), where the young men live together for several weeks. Ideally no woman should have lived in the *kaget ambip*, and either a unoccupied new house, a bachelor's house, or a temporary shelter is usually chosen. The structure is marked with red and yellow clay. Several men stay with the novices and prepare their food. If female relatives prepare food for the novices, they must give the food first to these men. While living in the *kaget ambip*, the boys are led out into the rain forest every day and taught how to spear fish, to use a bow and shoot arrows, to tie knots, to climb trees, and to hunt for tree-dwelling marsupials. The boys are also instructed in the rules they must follow in order preserve their health. These rules or restrictions are also called *kubup*.

#### **The Impact of Yawat: *Kubup* Ritual Restriction**

A person who attends *yawat* acquires *yawat ulip*, which is described as the smell from the decaying leaves at the *yawatbon* (*yawat* place). *Yawat ulip* is considered harmful outside the context of *yawat*, and participants must be

---

<sup>3</sup>While there is no formal marking of a cohort of initiates, they may call each other *kaget won* (*won* is a reciprocal name partner).

cautious about exposing others to it. A man returning from yawat should not touch other people, use their belongings, or allow them to come into contact with any of the objects that he carried with him to the yawatbon. He should avoid stepping over a hearth, or food, or tobacco. While he may accept food or tobacco from others, a person who has not been to the yawatbon may not take anything from him. These restrictions apply for several days.

Other restrictions are limited to the kaget or novices. After yawat, they are instructed not to swim, bathe, or cross streams or rivers for several weeks. Before coming into contact with water for the first time after yawat, they must say the words, "nirum arum kobonot," which is also a waruk magical spell for water. In many cases, the first time a kaget carries out a particular activity after yawat, it is marked by special words or actions. For example, before he uses a bow, he should hold onto the elbows of another man as he shoots an arrow. Before he can view a corpse, he must be told the appropriate kubup.

A kaget is also instructed to be circumspect in his movements and to avoid moving too quickly or carelessly. A kaget's need to control his actions is due to his increased vulnerability to injury and illness, as well as the harm that he poses to others.

Numerous food taboos, also known as kubup, are imposed upon the kaget when he returns from the yawat. Most of the

larger game animals, including hornbill, crocodiles, brush turkey, cassowary, and some types of pigs are *kubup*. Many of the smaller animals, including a number of species of fish, reptiles, and marsupials, are *kubup* as well. Some wild fruits and nuts and most introduced vegetables are also banned from consumption.

Many *kubup* food taboos can be explained by analogies between the foods and the ailments that the *kaget* may contract from them (see Table 5). For example, some foods are said to damage the *kaget*'s skin, causing scabies or grille (*yeng yeng*) or even more serious skin conditions, known collectively as *bop*, including tropical ulcers, leprosy, and yaws. These foods have rough outer surfaces, such as that of a pineapple, or come from trees with rough bark, such as okari nuts (*Terminalis sp.*). The analogy compares the outer skin of fruits, the bark of trees, and human skin, all known as *kat*. Other foods are *kubup* because they are large and round and appear swollen. They are not eaten because of the analogy that compares them to the

Table 5: Kubup Food Taboos

<u>Restricted Food</u>	<u>Effect</u>	<u>Feature/Analogy</u>
<b>Plants</b>		
kawak-breadfruit	swelling	large round shape
yemen-taro	" "	" " "
omanop-sweet potato	" "	" " "
demoyop/etop-wild fig	scabies-grille	grows from bark
om nom-sago	" "	has long thorns
auup-pitpit	" "	sharp sides ?
away-okari	ulcers on knees	rough bark
munit-bush fruit	ulcers on legs	?
aim-pandanus	fever	?
om kuk-sago heart	fever	?
arup demot-greens	pain	?
yum aitarak-banana	legs become bow-shaped	bowed, spindly shape
om kuem-sago	go crazy and die	sago eaten in myth
<b>Plants -- Recently Introduced Species</b>		
pumpkin, p. tops	swelling	large round shape
watermelon	" "	" " "
lacusina-loufah	" "	" " "
papayang-papaya	" "	" " "
orom-coconut	" "	" " "
mentimum-cucumber	" "	" " "
kanat-pineapple	scabies-grille	rough bark-skin
<b>Animals -- Reptiles</b>		
nin-snakes	fevers	slimy skin ?
kat-frogs	seizures	?
koyambon-turtles	seizures	?
yinberek-crocodiles	limbs paralyzed	force of jaw ? "male" species
yi ata-lace monitor	skin ulcers	slimy skin ?
yi okpan-sand monitor	" "	slimy skin ?

Table 5 (Cont.): Kubup Food Taboos

<u>Restricted Food</u>	<u>Effect</u>	<u>Feature-Analogy</u>
Animals -- Birds and Fish (On)		
on kevet-hornbill	Skin ulcers, swollen knees	bad skin, molts, "male" species
on maim-flying fox	swelling	eats breadfruit, which has round shape.
on monowan-brush turkey	scabies-grille	?
on kirup-catfish	cough	sharp whiskers ?
on kori-fish	skin ulcers	in yawat myth
on arok-fish	" "	" "
on korom-fish	" "	" "
but akmop-prawn	" "	lg. claws
on arik-fish	ulcers & die	in yawat myth
on waat-fish	ulcers on legs	in yawat myth
Animals -- Marsupials (Ba)		
ba ti-wallaby	swelling	?
ba arik-marsupial	emaciation	?
bambirim-bandicoot	" "	?
ba wang-marsupial	leg ulcers	?
Animals -- Pigs and Cassowary		
awon buti-white pig	pain	pig in yawat myth
kom awon-red pig	"	" " "
diap-cassowary	scabies-grille	in yawat myth
Insects		
wot-larvae	pimples (wotwot)	resemblance
et-grasshoppers	skin ulcers	rasp on legs

swelling caused by filariasis, which is endemic in the area (Taukruo and Nurse 1978-1979).<sup>4</sup> Other *kubup* restrictions are said to cause fever, seizures, pain, or other health problems.

The analogies employed in *kubup* food taboos follow conventionalized forms of natural metaphors also used in dream interpretations, *waruk* magical spells, and other contexts. Much as Schieffelin (1980) has noted for the Kaluli, taboo and magic can use the same metaphors but opposing strategies; magic seeks to bring together (and impart) what taboo keeps apart. Thus, in following the *kubup* food taboos, the novices are socialized into the cultural logic of the Yonggom which highlights particular features of and relationships between different natural species.

The information in Table 5 was compiled largely from interviews with Kobarara. While in most cases Kobarara was able to identify the ailment that eating a *kubup* food would cause, he was not always able to explain the analogy between the two. I discussed *kubup* taboos with many other people, both men and women, but was unable to identify many of the analogies between *kubup* foods and their potential consequences. In fact, many of the sets of *kubup* foods that I recorded were not in agreement. Foods that considered by

---

<sup>4</sup>Filariasis is caused by the parasitic nematode Wuscheria bancrofti.

Kobarara to be harmless were thought to be dangerous by others, and vice versa. This lack of consensus regarding the *kubup* food taboos forces the *kaget* to rely on the advice of senior men (*aamgono*) when deciding if they can eat a particular food.

The decision whether to designate a food as *kubup* is often made on an ad hoc basis by senior men. When young men spoke about their experiences with *kubup* restrictions, they expressed frustration at having to give away food, especially meat, to the *aamgono* because it was *kubup*. "If you catch a snake or an eel," I was told, "and then ask an *aamgono* whether you could eat it, he would always say 'no' and eat it himself." The lack of a consensus about what is *kubup* puts the *aamgono* in the position of arbitrating what a *kaget* can and cannot eat. The taboos thus represent another example of the social use of indeterminacy. The absence of a standard categorization of different plants and animals allows the senior men to exert control over the behavior of the novices.

This control also reverses previous social roles of food-giving and food-taking. Until *yawat*, young men are dependent upon adult men to provide them with meat. During the weeks following the *yawat* ceremony, the *kaget* are given instructions in hunting skills. Because of *kubup* food taboos, the *kaget* must turn over much of what they catch or kill to the senior men. The flow of meat is thereby

reversed, so that young boys begin to provide for their elders. Through *kubup* restrictions, *yawat* marks a transition in the social status of the novices from food-takers to food-givers.

The impact of the *kubup* restrictions upon the diet of the *kaget* is more than symbolic. The difficulty in finding the foods which he is permitted to consume means that frequently the novice must eat only sago and bananas. His limited diet is said to leave him hungry for meat and fat. The limited diet is also said to teach him to control his desires, separating him from a "greedy pig" which will destroy a garden, or dog that will steal when hungry.<sup>5</sup>

*Kubup* food taboos also impose restrictions on sharing food. Sharing food creates a relationship (cf: Schieffelin 1976) and to be prohibited from sharing food creates an opposition between persons. *Kubup* taboos thus disrupt relationships, which is a matter of strong sentiments among the Yonggom, known as *mimyop* (sorrow and loss, see Chapter 5). A close relative may discourage a young man from attending *yawat* so that the two will be able to continue sharing food. For example, Dako told his sister's son (mom) not to attend *yawat*, so that they could continue sharing food. Once *kubup* restrictions are lifted, however, a

---

<sup>5</sup>This contrast between expected behavior for men and the behavior of pigs and dogs is used in many contexts.

relationship may resume as before, with the *kaget* aware of his obligation to give as well as receive meat.

*Kubup* food taboos separate mothers from their sons in the same manner. In some cases, a mother may follow the *kubup* food taboos placed on her son in order to avoid feelings of *mimyop*. In other cases, a woman may forbid her son from attending *yawat* because of the risk of illness associated with *yawat*:

One widowed mother stopped both of her sons from attending *yawat*. When the men in the village came to take her eldest son to *yawat*, she confronted them with a knife, telling them that if her son fell sick or died, she would attack them. The men backed down and left the boy behind. Later she forbade her youngest son from going to *yawat* as well.

The same woman attempted to persuade me from attending *yawat*. She said that she felt *mimyop* (sorrow and loss) in anticipation of my becoming *kaget* because I gave her food and tobacco; after *yawat* we would no longer be able to share food. She was also concerned that I would not adhere to the *kubup* taboos and would become ill or even die. She told me a myth about the fate of two young *kaget* who ignored *kubup* restrictions:

Two *kaget* were hunting for birds and killed a hornbill. They cooked the hornbill along with several other birds, but planned to give it to an *aamgono* to eat because it was *kubup* for them. When the older boy unwrapped the bird from the bark, however, he scalded his fingers and instinctively brought them to his lips. Since he accidentally tasted some of the hornbill meat, he decided that the *kubup* restriction had already been broken and that he and the other boy might as well eat the hornbill themselves. Later their knees became swollen and they began to shed their skin. They sang this song before dying:

wetkok dori	(waruk names)
batkok dori	
eeh, ne yon-eh	yes, my leg-eh
ne yon o-eh	my leg o-eh.

The myth portrays the risk involved in attending yawat. In the next chapter I will consider why a "male" species such as the hornbill should be forbidden to the kaget.

**Reprisal: Kimit Bagandi**

After living in the kaget ambip (or "novice house") for several weeks, the boys return to their homes, which they enter and exit through openings cut into the side of the house. They continue to follow all the kubup food taboos until several months have passed and a wild pig (*awon kiip*) is killed. Then the kaget are brought back into the rain forest for *kimit bagandi*, which is the closing ceremony of yawat.

Several weeks after I attended yawat, Kobarara, who had been in charge of the ceremony, decided that it was time for *kimit bagandi*. The ceremony was being held sooner than usual because of concern that I would grow impatient with the kubup taboos. After failing to get permission from land-owners to have men hunt on their land for a wild pig, I bought a young pig from the village.<sup>6</sup>

On the day of the ceremony, I waited in my house until two men arrived to escort me to the site for *kimit bagandi*. We walked through the refugee camp and gardens until we were at a distance from any occupied

---

<sup>6</sup>A village pig can be substituted for a wild pig in *kimit bagandi*, as long as it was not brought into the house to eat or sleep as a piglet. The first pig that we tried to purchase was excluded on these grounds.

houses.<sup>7</sup> One of the men took out a single *kamok* flute and blew it as we walked. We listened for the response of the second flute, which was at the site of *kimit bagandi*.

We entered the clearing and Kibinok came forward carrying a branch of black palm leaves. Following his directions, I put my head down and peered through the leaves at Kobarara, who was holding up the head of a pig. Kobarara called out that the pig was Kamberap.

Kibinok put the branch aside and I saw the rest of the camp, which included a clearing, a shelter of branches thrust into the ground, the slaughtered pig, and a pair of logs tied with cane to make a bench. The two other *kaget* were already at the camp. The men began preparing to bake the pig in the bark of a tree. The conversation was casual and Kobarara told fragments of the myths associated with *yawat*.

Later I heard a loud humming or whirring sound. It had a lower pitch than the *kanim* bullroarer. I was told to stay where I was and not to look around. After a few minutes, the humming ceased and I was led several meters away. The other novices held leaves in front of their eyes. A man squatted on the ground and blew a reed and leaf whistle that made a noise which sounded vaguely like crying children. He explained that the instrument was called *danamanop* or "infants," and how it was made. Behind him someone slowly swung a tiny bow-shaped bullroarer made from a stick and a strip of a leaf. It made a buzzing sound and was called *watmung* or "flies." I was led to another clearing where the bullroarer I heard earlier was being swung. Kibinok explained that its name was *diap yawat* or "yawat cassowary" and how it was made.

After the pig was cooked and the bark had been opened, the senior men brought me pieces of fruits and vegetables which were previously *kubup*. One by one Kibinok said the *kubup* words for each of the foods I was to taste and then passed a piece of the food under his left arm into my mouth.

One *kubup* spell was for *okari* nuts (*away*). When Kobarara and I talked about the consequences of eating away for a *kaget*, he said that the *kaget* would get bad

---

<sup>7</sup>Women and uninitiated men who had gardens in the area had been told to stay away that afternoon.

skin like the rough bark of the okari tree. The *kubup* words for *okari* were:

*Bunggup banggap kamenewa ane kowap*  
bumps on the tree bark (where the sap coagulates),  
don't come if he eats

*Yon bendom dinggi bendom kandom*  
knees, elbows, shoulders

*Bunggup banggap kamene berenewa bangganapbe*  
bumps, don't come, open up, and become swollen

*benmene benamberap kop ko*  
bring it, don't make it, so

*Kimirok Momya*  
*Kimirok Momya* (another name for *yawat*)

*ye ambe nembet kapsan oh*  
his father, I give it (the food), oh

The *kubup* words for *okari* thus keep the *kaget* from being plagued with bumps or sores on his elbows, shoulders, and knees. These skin ulcers are analogous to the bumps on the bark of the *okari* tree where sap coagulates.

After tasting the different foods, we ate the pig, were given the opportunity to try the various *yawat* instruments, and buried those instruments that I was not collecting. The fire was rekindled to burn all traces of the ceremony, after which we returned to the village. Some of us were carrying pig meat that we kept concealed. As when we returned from *yawat*, the people in the village were distant and subdued upon our return.

After participating in *kimit bagandi*, the novices return to their families' houses, entering by the public door on the men's side of the house (prior to the construction of modern-style houses). Although a number of *kubup* restrictions have been lifted during *kimit bagandi*, most continue beyond the ceremony. *Kimit bagandi* marks the

beginning of the process by which these restrictions are gradually lifted.

The process of lifting *kubup* restrictions may be timed according to the physical development of a child born close to the date of the original *yawat* ceremony. The development and maturation of the child are carefully observed to mark the passage of time. When the infant is able to eat cooked sago, one *kubup* restriction may be removed. When the infant is able to say *enna ambe* (mother and father) or when it is able to climb up into the house on its own, the *kaget* is able to try other *kubup* foods. At first he will only taste a small amount of the food in question and wait to see if he becomes ill. If he suffers no ill-effects, he will resume eating that particular food. If he becomes ill, he may wait several months or years before trying to eat that food again.

Most *kubup* restrictions placed on the *kaget* are lifted after several years. Other restrictions are followed for a decade or longer. In the case of the hornbill and the crocodile, which are considered "male" species (see Chapter 6), some men wait until old age before abandoning the associated *kubup* taboos. Other men, plagued by ill health or fragility, avoid these foods their entire lives.

### **The Power of Kamberap's Sacrifice**

The act of cannibalism depicted in the myth of Kamberap can be seen as the resolution to the problem created in the incestuous relationship between Kamberap and Yumgon. Incest violates the basic principles of both alliance and reciprocity. If men were to take their own sisters as wives, it would not be possible to establish alliances through marriage exchange. The act of incest also violates the exchange relationship between the two brothers-in-law (*wononggim*). Among the Yonggom, the violation of exchange relationships, like the more general problem of unrequited reciprocity, is experienced as a threat to one's humanity. In Yonggom myth, unrequited reciprocity has tragic consequences; people who are denied reciprocity become animals. Thus, in the myth of the aunt (*nimba*) and her brother's children (see Chapter Four), when the aunt refused to feed her brother's children, they became flying foxes. This mythological treatment of unrequited reciprocity is transformed by Kamberap's actions in the yawat myth.

After the act of incest, Kamberap redefines himself as no longer human. He leaves his sister's and brother-in-law's house and takes up residence in the rain forest. Instead of receiving cooked sago from his sister like a person, he steals raw sago from her like an animal. When Kamberap is caught in a trap, he instructs his brother-in-law Kaim to "say 'pig' and not 'man,'" forcing Kaim to

accept Kamberap's redefinition of himself as non-human. Kamberap thus reverses the standard mythological resolution to the violation of reciprocity by sacrificing himself and becoming non-human, rather than forcing this fate upon his brother-in-law. Kamberap's sacrifice and the resulting cannibal feast thus resolve the problem created by the act of incest. The cannibal feast can be seen as a drama of the reinstatement of reciprocity through the re-establishment of the fundamental condition of society: marriage to someone other than one's sister. The myth also makes this possible by founding the arat pig feasts through which the Yonggom organize the exchange of cowrie shell valuables (*od*). Since these are the major valuables used in marriage transactions, the feasts enable the Yonggom to create marriages through exchange. While Kamberap's act of incest violates the principle of reciprocity through which marriage and society are organized, his sacrifice allows for the re-institution of marriage exchange. As such, the sacrifice can be seen as a founding act of society.

The myth of Kamberap also presents a solution to the problem of unrequited reciprocity as it is manifest in sorcery (Chapter 4). After a death, the Yonggom discuss violations of reciprocity that may have motivated acts of sorcery. Even though all Yonggom have the potential to become sorcerers, those who act on this potential are considered to have violated the social order and become non-

human. This is spoken of as "*amonom be kumka*," to "turn into" or "become" a sorcerer.

Although violent responses to sorcery among the Yonggom are limited by the indeterminacy of sorcery proceedings, if the kin of the deceased are able to identify the sorcerer, his fate parallels that of Kamberap: not only is he killed, but he is also consumed in a cannibal feast. His body is butchered, baked in tree bark, and consumed like the meat of a pig. Thus the challenge to the social order posed by sorcery is resolved in the same manner as the challenge posed by incest, through the redefinition of man as non-human and the consumption of his body at a cannibal feast.

In the *yawat* ritual, the novices are enjoined to participate in the symbolic cannibal feast, reaffirming the fundamental relationships of the social order. Afterwards, the behavior and appetites of the novices are governed by *kubup*. They are no longer able to share food with those persons with whom they were formerly close, but have to hunt for others, including older men who stand in relation to them as potential in-laws.

The power of Kamberap's sacrifice emerges in its ability to resolve the fundamental problem of unrequited reciprocity. It is a founding act of society, both in terms of its re-institution of social relations through marriage exchange, and in terms of its incorporation of novices into the social order. As a resolution of the challenges posed

by unrequited reciprocity, Kamberap's sacrifice can be seen as an act of redemption, a Yonggom myth of salvation.

### Chapter Eleven: Gender and Recursion in Yawat

Up and down  
 swing my brother Kanim [the bullroarer]  
 up and down, swing him

-- yawat song

In this chapter, I examine ideas about sex, gender, and fertility in *yawat*. In addition to the processes of ritual dramaturgy discussed in the previous chapter, the Yonggom make use of sound and smell in conveying meaning in *yawat*. In this chapter, I discuss the use of numinous sound-producing instruments in *yawat* and its reprisal, *kimit bagandi*. I also examine the smell of rot and decay that is attributed to men returning from *yawat* as well as menstruating women.

At the conclusion of the chapter, I suggest that *yawat* is organized recursively, by which I mean that it takes itself as its own object. Since the meanings produced in *yawat* are contingent upon the process through which they are transformed in other aspects of the complex of ritual and myth, they are essentially indeterminate. Finally, I show how *yawat* can be interpreted in terms of this recursive model.

#### Numinous Sounds: Bullroarers, Flutes and Other Instruments

Sound has been described as a privileged medium for the communication of the sacred, or the mysterious, or the holy (Tuzin 1984). As a result of this privilege, certain sounds

may be considered powerful and even dangerous. This is the case for the bullroarers, flutes, and whistles of yawat.

The yawat bullroarer (*kanim*) and flutes (*kamok*) are described in the myth of Kamberap. After his tongue and jawbone were hung in the fork of a tree, Kamberap gave the instructions for making the bullroarer and flutes:

*At yeret kumbet denmenaniwa.*  
Take yeret wood and sharpen it.

*Enyeret uwakyeret kumbet denmenaniwa.*  
Take enyeret or uwakyeret wood (which has red sap like blood) and sharpen it.

*Nongborowe murubanabe nongboro ananoriwah.*  
Tie it (the bullroarer) with cane, make a hole, tie the cane around.

*Kumbet wamburupmip kanen kanet ku waanwene angga dorok.*  
Swing it (the bullroarer) around and it will fly, so stand to the side.

*Owet ku natmene Kamok wutmenabime andon.*  
Cut the bamboo. You blow Kamok (the flutes), he said.

*At yeret ku denmenaniwa nongboro kanane ayiwo*  
Take yeret wood and sharpen it, tie it with cane and then swing it.

*Wengobokdan kanen kanet ku*  
If it (the bullroarer) doesn't make a noise, (sung):

*Mutut-oh, mutut baangge mutut-oh-eh*  
"The notch, cut the notch, the notch-oh-eh"

*Mutut baangge Murin-oh-eh*  
"Cut the notch, Murin-oh-eh (name of yawat)."

*Kamene monggotbime yo andon.*  
Do that and make the mouth, he said.

*Kamene ayip kanet ku doborowo andon.*  
Do that and swing it (the bullroarer) and it (the sound) will stay, he said.

Ogot ayanip ku ongme doberan ban andon.  
 If you swing it (the bullroarer) on the ground,  
 it (the sound) won't stay, he said.

Komok yeaningogo ku Deyudea yipkon koropkon.  
 Komok's name is Deyudea yipkon koropkon.

The paired flutes known as *kanim*, one slightly longer than the other, are single, undecorated nodes of bamboo between fifteen and twenty centimeters in length (see Drawing 4). They are end-blown and played alternately, producing two contrasting notes. The *kanim* are used only during *yawat*; when the sound is heard, men know that it is time for *yawat* and women know to stay close to the settlement. The *kanim* flutes are made at the time of *yawat* and discarded at the site of the *yawat*.

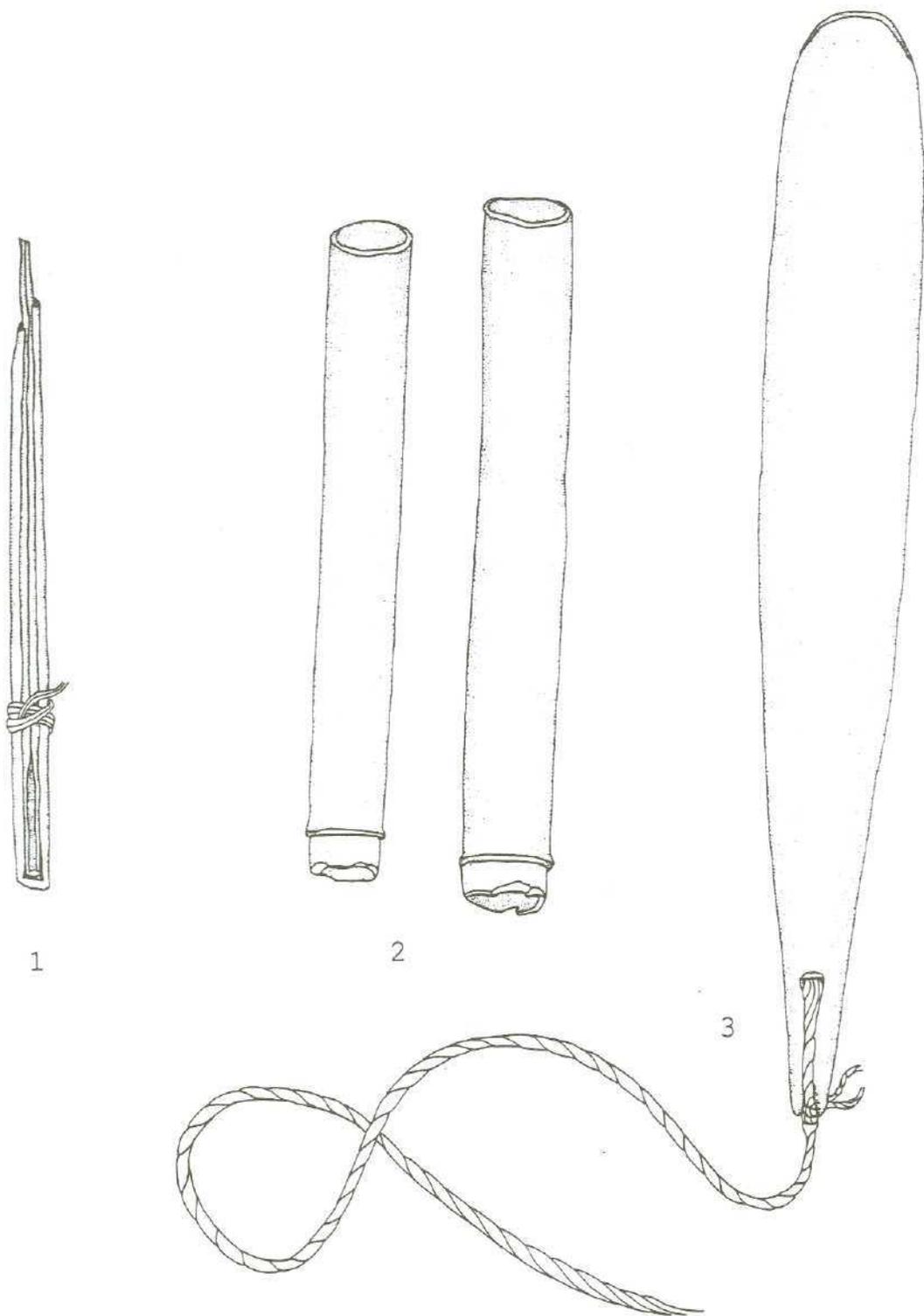
Women, children, and uninitiated men who hear the flutes are told that the sounds are produced by a tall spirit woman (*wonong awat*) with a stringbag and the long sago fiber skirt (*wuyam* or *om miim wonom*) usually worn during mourning. When the instruments are revealed, the novices realize that the sounds are not produced by spirit-beings, but by men.

If the story of the spirit woman is a deception, what is the meaning attributed to the flutes? Some men say that the flutes have no meaning at all, that they just "sing" or are used to make noise. Other men say that the sounds made by the flutes are a representation (*kuruak*) of Komot's grandmother (*awo*). Another explanation is that the flutes are of practical significance; that their purpose is to

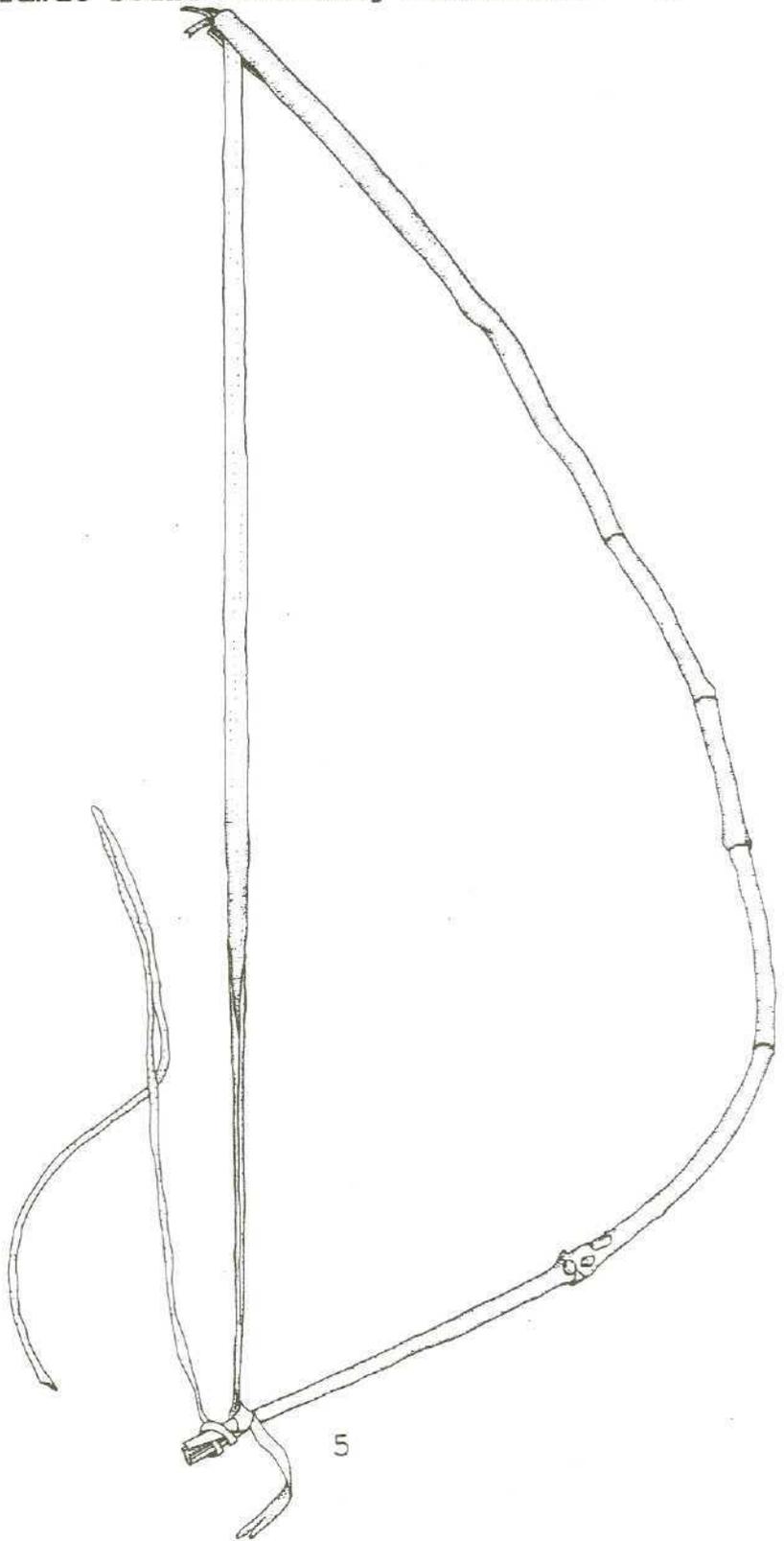
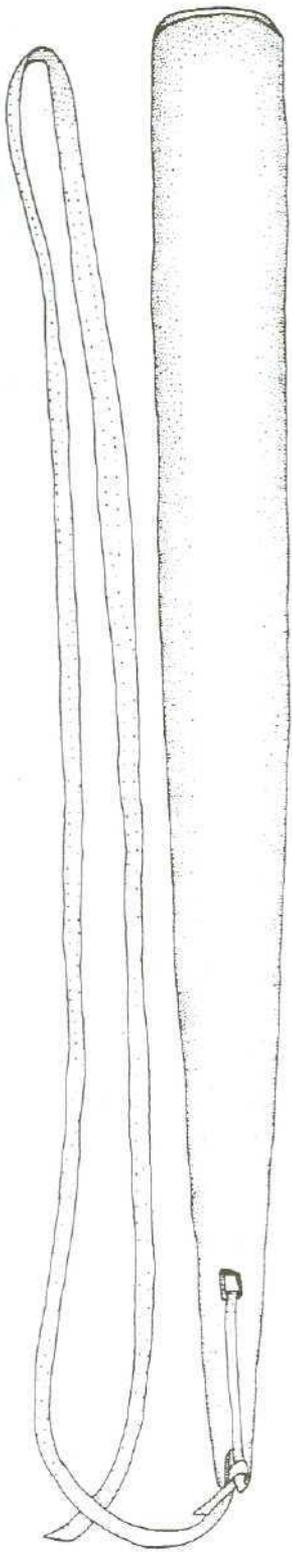
compel men to attend yawat (*yawat minipka*). Other men suggest that the flutes mark the "time" of yawat.

The wooden bullroarers known as *kamok* are oblong and about thirty centimeters long (see Drawing 4). At the bottom of the bullroarer is a notch called the "mouth" (*monggot* or *monggotkono*) and above the notch is a hole known as the "nostril" (*kiringkono*). A cord of bark string or cane is tied through this hole and attached to a thin wand about 1.5 meters long. The bullroarer is swung at two speeds, producing two patterns of sound. It is first swung slowly and steadily for a number of revolutions, which makes the low humming or "whirring" sound characteristic of bullroarers. Then the instrument is whipped around in one quick revolution and allowed to slow down, producing a high-pitched whine that tapers off into the first pattern of sound.

The sounds of the bullroarer often carry into the settled area, where the public explanation is that they were made by a spirit man (*karup awat*) named *Kanim*. The sound is

**Drawing 4: Yawat Sound-Producing Instruments - A**

Drawing 5: Yawat Sound-Producing Instruments - B



## Labels for Drawings 4 &amp; 5

1. Male cult whistle, known as *Danamanop* or "Children."  
(University Museum, 89-17-105). Made by Kibinok Kerek,  
Miripki clan, Dome Village.
2. Male cult flutes, known as *Komok*. (University Museum,  
89-17-106 A&B). Made by Nonggop Buyop, Yat clan,  
Kombut village, Irian Jaya (living in Dome Refugee  
Camp).
3. Male cult bullroarer called *Kanim*. (University Museum,  
89-17-102). Made by Agus of Ninati village, Irian Jaya  
(residing in Dome Refugee Camp).
4. Male cult bullroarer known as *Diap Yawat* or "Yawat  
Cassowary." (University Museum, 89-17-103). Made by  
Kutem Buru, Namanggo clan, Dome Village.
5. Bow-shaped bullroarer, known as *Watmung Yawat* or "Yawat  
Flies." (University Museum, 89-17-104). Made by  
Kibinok Kerek, Miripki clan, Dome Village.

referred to as *Kanim ye weng*, Kanim's voice or speech. When the bullroarer is revealed, the novices realize that the sounds are produced by men and not by spirit-beings.

Since the public account of the sounds produced by the bullroarer is a deception, what do men say about its meaning? Some men say that the sounds are a representation (*kuruak* of Kamberap himself. Other men say that the bullroarer, like the flutes, has no meaning; it simply "sings," is used to make noise, or is used to mark the location of *yawat*. A bullroarer cannot be swung in the rain forest without first making a clearing. Unlike the flutes, which may be played anywhere, the bullroarer is used only at the place of *yawat*. Thus while the flutes temporally designate *yawat*, the bullroarers spatially demarcate the rite.

When the sound-producing instruments are revealed to the *kaget*, they hold up leaves shielding their faces from the instruments.<sup>1</sup> After seeing the instruments, however, they are shown how they are made and how the sounds are produced. The explanation for the *danamanop* whistle, a strip of bark folded in two over a leaf reed (see Drawing 4), was this:

---

<sup>1</sup>This behavior has parallels in an incident in the *yawat* myth. Before Kaim shoots Kamberap, Kamberap tells him to hold up a leaf from the *aruawot* plant (which resembles the bamboo blade of the *kanat* arrow, used for killing pigs), so that he would not see Kamberap's body when shooting him.

Burn the black palm yerot and put a leaf between it to make *danamanop yawat*. It sounds like children.

The *watmung yawat* is a small, bow-shaped bullroarer made from a twig, a bowstring from leaf fiber, and a string tied to a wand (see Drawing 5). It produces a sound like the buzzing of insects, and the explanation for the instrument was given as follows:

Cut a branch from the *karan* tree and get (a strip of) *yetnak* leaf. Tie both ends of the leaf and split both ends of the stick. Make it like a bow, tie a length of cane to it, tie it to a stick, and spin it around. It sounds like flies (*watmung*).

For the bullroarer known as *diap yawat*, which has an oblong blade and a twirling cord made of cane split down the center (see Drawing 5), and produces sounds like those made by a cassowary, the explanation was this:

*Konbinop* wood, it is made from the plant *konbin* [wild pandanus with broad leaves; the prop roots are used]. Make it with *naknong* cane that is split. It is like *Kanim* [the other bullroarer], but *Kanim* is made from wood and this one is made from *konbin* and split *naknong* cane.

Although the instruments are demonstrated and explained, they are not completely demystified. While the *kaget* do put down the leaves that they held between themselves and the instruments, most remain too timid to try the instruments themselves when given the opportunity. Tuzin has commented on this paradox, suggesting that the "interpretation that the sounds are man-made is inadequate to the experience..."

(1984:580, emphasis in original).<sup>2</sup> Why do the mystical and symbolic associations of these sound-producing instruments linger even after they have been revealed as deceptions?

There are many other sound-producing instruments used outside the context of yawat. Bamboo jaw harps (*benggom*) are played casually by men in a variety of settings. Hourglass-shaped "kundu" drums (*miap*) and fish-tailed drums (*wot*) are used during dance processions and performances. A rattle made from a cassowary toenail (*diap turuk*) may be attached to the horn of a black palm bow, where it will resonate loudly when the bowstring is plucked during *kibirat* sorcery inquests and certain dance performances. The sound of the slit-gong or garamut (*wong*) thunders through the forest after a killing or in warning of a raid. Seed rattles (*buseek*) are worn tucked into the back of dancers' bark belts during the performance of the dance known as *yok*. Children make whistles from blades of grass. Despite the obvious similarities between these instruments and those used for yawat, none of the former have any numinous associations. This quality must therefore be dependent on more than the simple sound-producing capabilities of the yawat instruments.

---

<sup>2</sup>Tuzin (1984), like Gourlay (1975), looks for an answer to this question in terms of the characteristics of the sounds produced by the instruments commonly associated with New Guinea cults, namely flutes, bullroarers, and garamut slit-gong drums.

The sounds produced by these instruments at *kimit bagandi* mislead the novices, and the act of revelation strips away these referential meanings or associations, seemingly reducing the instruments to objects of deception. But they are more than that.

**Figure 3: Symbolism of Yawat Sound-Producing Instruments**

Instrument	Yonggom Name	Referent
Bamboo Flutes	<i>Kamok</i>	Spirit Woman
Bullroarer	<i>Kanim</i>	Spirit Man
"Cassowary" Bullroarer	<i>Diap Yawat</i>	Woman
Whistle	<i>Danamanop</i>	Children
Bow-Shaped Bullroarer	<i>Watumung Yawat</i>	Flies

Taken together, the yawat instruments (see Figure 3) seem to refer to relations between men and women, and more specifically, to fertility. The "female" flutes are paired with the "male" bullroarer, and the counterpart of the "female" cassowary is the "male" pig killed for the ritual. Associated with the "male" and "female" pairs is the "child" whistle. Initially, the meaning of the "fly" bullroarer seems puzzling, until one recalls that blue flies or bottle flies (known as *watumung*) are said to carry a message that there has been a death because they are associated with corpses left to decay on exposure platforms (see Chapter 6). The "fly" bullroarer thus connects the smell of a decaying

corpse with the rotten, decaying smell associated with both menstruation and the male cult.<sup>3</sup>

An important yawat myth also indicates that the instruments are associated with relations between men and women:

Wuk (the primal woman and creator) first used the bullroarers, flutes, and whistles that are a part of yawat. When she made sago, she beat the sago with a stick and then swung the *kanim* bullroarer. Then she beat the sago again and played the *kamok* flutes.

She was using the instruments that way when Komot (the mythical first man) overheard the sounds of the bullroarer and flutes. He followed the sounds to the camp where Wuk was making sago. He came close and watched her.

Wuk saw Komot spying on her and showed him how to use the instruments. Afterwards, Komot took the instruments for men. Since then, women do not have any knowledge of the yawat instruments.

Thus the sound-producing instruments are said to have been originally used by women and have subsequently become part of yawat. This secret is protected by the sanction of illness if women see the instruments. When a married man leaves his home prior to yawat, he tells his wife, "I am going for yawat, you stay in the house until I return." He warns her that she is *bomot*, or "at risk." Recently during a Christian Revival meeting of the Evangelical Church of Papua held at Atkamba, the bullroarers and flutes from yawat were publicly revealed. When a woman who attended the

---

<sup>3</sup>The relationship between the "smell" of fertility and the "smell" of death requires independent exposition and will be taken up elsewhere.

meeting later became ill, her sickness was attributed to her exposure to the cult objects.

The question whether women are aware of the machinations of male cult activities in Melanesia is a subject of intense anthropological curiosity but little knowledge. Yonggom women know that a pig is slaughtered and consumed during the ritual; very often they are responsible for raising the animal and negotiating its selling price. Women are also knowledgeable regarding *kubup* food taboos placed on initiates. On the subject of the flutes and the bullroarers, whether or not women know how the sounds are produced or that they are produced by men, they are aware of two things: that the instruments pair "male" and "female" while also demarcating the separation of the two.

It appears that it is the novices who remain "deceived" and not the women; for it is they who are confronted by the paradox that the instruments both are and are not associated with gender. I suggest that for the Yonggom it is this paradox that keeps the novice in awe of the instruments even after they have been revealed as produced and operated by men.

#### **The Smell of the Brush Fowl**

The term *yawat* is applied to both the male cult and menstruation (*nima yi yawat*, women's *yawat*). Until recently, women left their houses when menstruating and took

up residence in small black palm shelters built in the rain forest.<sup>4</sup> Earlier I noted how both menstruating women and men returning from yawat are described as having a rotten, decaying, fermenting "bad smell" which is potentially harmful to others with whom they come into contact. A number of taboos meant to limit the potential ill-effects of these "bad smells" apply to both menstruating women and men returning from yawat.

Men attending yawat acquire the "bad smell" known as *ulip*. Yawat *ulip* is associated with the rotten leaves and other organic debris moved aside in clearing the ritual compound. *Ulip* is also the name for the clearings made by brush turkeys (*on monowan*) on the floor of the rain forest. After laying its eggs, the brush turkey scratches together the leaves from a wide radius, building a mound of organic matter. The heat generated by the decay of this material incubates the brush turkey's eggs, which are abandoned once the nest is complete. A brush turkey's nest is easily seen since it is situated in the center of a large clearing. The process of rotting and decay, as well as its smell, is thus metaphorically linked to the fecundity of the brush turkey.

The term *ulip* refers to both the clearing made by the brush turkey and the yawat compound. One of the instructions sung by Kamberap was to clear an area in order

---

<sup>4</sup>Menstruation is *wod*, the word for the moon. Childbirth also used to take place in these shelters.

to build the shelter. The bullroarer must be swung in a clearing and is said to "mark the place" of yawat. The "bad smell" of decay is associated with both types of clearing, and men attending yawat acquire the smell. Like the *ipdem* of a menstruating woman, the "bad smell" of yawat *ulip* can cause poor health and the loss of vitality. It is the vehicle for the potentially harmful effects of yawat.

The smell of decay known as *ulip* is associated with two contexts, the mound constructed by the bush fowl, and the yawat compound built by men. *Ulip* is also like *ipdem*, the smell attributed to menstruating women. The smells bring together the meanings associated with the bush fowl, yawat, and menstruation. They become a medium for the communication of the concept of fertility.

#### **Attributing Gender to Bodies**

In the context of her discussion of cults in Melanesia, Marilyn Strathern (1988:211) refers to the "singularity of the object," by which she means that the inherent features of an object may be less significant than the definition given to them. Thus whether a flute is represented as a penis or a breast depends on the way in which it is treated. Strathern suggests that the concept of "singularity" is applicable to the way in which Melanesians view bodies as well. Gender is thus less of an inherent attribute of bodies than something attributed to or appropriated by them

in actions or exchange. What is ultimately accomplished in rituals like Yonggom yawat, Strathern suggests, is not the making of men, but rather the appropriation of the capacity to truly reproduce men, i.e. to make men capable of fatherhood.

There are two Yonggom myths associated with yawat that are related to this theme. The characters in the first myth are Komot, the primal man and trickster, and Wuk, the primal woman and creator:

When Wuk first met Komot, he did not know how to make a bow, so he hunted with a spear. Since he did not know how to make fire, he left his food in the sun to dry. As he did not know how to process the starch from sago palms, he ate clay. He did not know how to store water in bamboo containers; when he became thirsty, he walked to the river to drink.

Wuk taught Komot all of these things; how to hunt with a bow and arrow, how to make fire and cook his food, how to process sago, and how to store water.

When Wuk met Komot, his body was not completely formed. He had no anus and thus could not defecate. After digesting a meal, he would vomit to expel his feces. One afternoon while Komot was sleeping, Wuk took a sharpened stick and gouged a hole for Komot's anus. When Komot awoke, he shat out the foothills leading to the Star Mountains.

Wuk's body, too, was not completely formed; she had no vagina. While Wuk slept, Komot took a sharpened stick and gouged a hole for Wuk's vagina.

In the myth, Wuk gives Komot access to the basic requirements of life: fire, water, and food. She also completes his body by giving him an anus. In return, Komot complete Wuk's body by giving her a vagina. Although the two acts appear unbalanced (woman can give birth through her

vagina while man cannot give birth through his anus), they are symmetrical because Wuk gave Komot the means by which he could create the rest of Yonggom culture, which is depicted piecemeal in a number of myths about Komot's interaction with his sister's sons, the Yoknat (see Chapter 5). The important point of the myth for this discussion is that Wuk's body became "female" through exchange with Komot.

Another yawat myth provides an alternative account of female sexual organs, although it recapitulates the notion that gender is created:

There was no sago and there were no women. Two men, Kanduwoyop and Kawengyop, went into the rain forest to harvest pandanus. They used a bamboo knife to cut down the red pandanus fruit.

Kanduwoyop took the bamboo knife, and in order to make Kawengyop into a woman, castrated him. Kawengyop, however, had no vagina or breasts, so he was not a woman.

The two went back to the house and cooked the pandanus. When they squeezed the red juice from the fruit, blood came from Kawengyop's mouth.

Because Kawengyop had no vagina, the two could not have sex. They brought Beren, a man who shares his name with the brilliant yellow and orange crested bird of paradise, and forced him between Kawengyop's legs.

Beren went feet first into Kawengyop's body; his knees became breasts, his big toes became nipples, and his mouth became Kawengyop's vagina. Kawengyop became a woman.

One can see that this is so, because the vagina looks like a mouth. That is why it is said, "having sex is like putting your penis in a man's mouth."

As in the previous myth, gender is created through human activity rather than independent of it. Beren's actions

complete Kawengyop's transformation into a woman. The myth also suggests the applicability of Strathern's notion of the "singularity of the object" to sexual acts. Like the example of the flute that can be either a penis or a vagina depending on how it is used, sexual acts are not inherently heterosexual or homosexual; this depends on how they are defined. As such, sexual intercourse can be seen as an act of exchange that attributes gender to bodies.

Taken together, the two myths make several points. First, gender is created through actions and transactions rather than resident in bodies.<sup>5</sup> Second, men actively contribute to the creation of women's bodies. Third, through their role in sexual intercourse, men continue to attribute gender to women's bodies.

### Ritual Reproduction

Yawat contains within itself the argument for its own reproduction. The myth of Kamberap includes an injunction to enact the ritual for the uninitiated; one of Kamberap's instructions to his brother-in-law Kaim is:

*Waandune, karup ye geron man,*  
Cut it (the pig), the man who doesn't know,

---

<sup>5</sup>The gendering of bodies is also evident in the apparent paradox in which the *kaget* avoids those foods which are considered "male" species, particularly the crocodile and the hornbill. The reason for this is that yawat begins the process by which the body is gendered male and while the process is incomplete, the consumption of a "male" species is presumably harmful.

*Koniwo anokantet korokbenene wankoniwo anak kanet ku,*  
 give it to him to eat, show him, cut it and give it to  
 him to eat

*yiri muru motkom kamberap yimok yamok*  
 (the name) *yiri muru motkom Kamberap yimok yamok*

*ep kat wapdan. Andewoniwo anogo," andon.*  
 you taste his flesh. Give him a share," he said.

Thus a requirement of *yawat* is to stage the ritual for others. When a novice is fed a portion of the meat from the pig identified as *Kamberap*, not only is he participating in a symbolic cannibal feast, but the organizers are fulfilling the injunction to introduce others to the ritual.

That the ritual includes the terms of its own reproduction is significant. Tuzin (1980:45) has suggested that the experience of a stage of the Tambaran cult changes when the initiate later takes up the mantle of the initiator. This suggestion helps to refine the question of what the ritual "means" to the novice who does not know the identity of *Kamberap* or the other myths associated with *yawat*. He will learn some of the myths during his period of seclusion in the rain forest, but through repeated participation in *yawat* and exposure to different variants of *yawat* myths, the meaning of the rite for him will continue to change.

### Ritual and Recursion

Although thus far I have presented yawat in a linear fashion, I suggest that the ritual is organized recursively. By recursive, I mean that yawat produces meaning by taking itself as its own object. A familiar example of recursion is the scene in which two mirrors have been placed so that the image of one mirror is reflected onto the other and this image is reflected back onto the first, so that the images of images continue ad infinitum. A recursive process not only makes reference to the production of its own arguments, but transforms its earlier arguments as it progresses. A recursive ritual thus demonstrates through the process of transformation that the meanings it produces are not what they seem; not only is meaning contingent, but it is also fleeting and indeterminate.

Let me contrast linear and recursive models of ritual. A linear model of ritual implies that meaning and experience are cumulative, so that the knowledge that a participant has at any given point during the ritual is a part of the whole. This process can be seen in any linear revelation of increasingly detailed knowledge, as is the aim of most educational processes. In a recursive ritual, however, the meanings produced at a given moment are later revealed as being misleading or false. The meanings produced in a recursive ritual are not partial approximations of some truth; they are always indeterminate.

Let me illustrate what I mean by ritual recursion with a brief example from yawat. In the discussion of numinous sound-producing instruments, I showed how referential meanings (e.g. that the sounds of the flutes were produced by a spirit woman) were obviated when the instruments were revealed to the novices. This produced a paradox in that the instruments were still treated as if they were numinous. My explanation of the paradox was that the meaning of the flutes at any particular ritual moment can only be understood with respect to their transformations at other points within the ritual. Although the revelation that the sounds are produced by men seemed to suggest that the gender of instruments was no longer an issue, the only resolution of the paradox was to consider the myth accounting for how men acquired the instruments.

The "work" of obviating referential meaning that takes place in yawat is roughly equivalent to the transformations that take place in graded male cults found elsewhere in Melanesia, in which meanings are revealed as layer upon layer of deceit (e.g. Barth 1975, Tuzin 1980, Jorgenson 1981, 1990). While Jorgenson does not use the term "recursion," he has made a similar argument regarding the production of meaning in the cult of Telefolmin, which he says:

...figures as an assault on the given which takes not only the public world, but its own machinations as its object. The succession of disclosures sets up a

trajectory whose path sketches the precariousness of consensual truths by which people live (1990:45).

While yawat lacks the graded levels of the Telefolmin cult, it has a similar dynamic in that it involves recursive transformations of its meanings.

I shall now present a recursive summary of yawat, showing how meaning is transformed within the cult. The reader may thus judge the utility of the model of ritual recursion.

#### **A Recursive Summary of Yawat**

I take as the first layer of meaning the public view that the sounds which spatially and temporally demarcate yawat are produced by male and female spirit beings. The revelation that the sounds are produced by men creates a paradox that cannot immediately be resolved.

The second layer of meaning is the myth that the instruments were used by women in the past, even though now they are used only by men. Taken together with the paradox described above, the myth suggests that not only do the instruments pair "male" and "female," but they also separate the two. These meanings are later refined by the revelation of further sound-producing instruments, which when viewed alongside the other instruments as a set, suggest that the process by which gender is separated and paired is associated with fertility.

The third layer of meaning concerns the creation of gender itself. Myths suggest that gender is not resident in bodies, but is created through actions and transactions. Through their contribution to the creation of female bodies, and through their participation in sexual intercourse, which is an act of exchange that attributes gender to bodies, men are actively engaged in the reproductive process.

The fourth layer of meaning concerns the rite itself. As is common elsewhere in Melanesia, there is an analogy between the cult and menstruation. The analogy exists in name as well as idea; the term *yawat* refers to both the cult and to menstruation. Furthermore, the two are linked by the potentially debilitating effects they can have on others, which is transmitted by their "bad smell." This smell is associated with rotting and decay, and through an analogy with the brush turkey's nest, with fecundity as well. The smell is a medium for the communication of fertility.

The final layer of meaning is concerned with the relationship between the myth of Kamberap's sacrifice and ideas about gender and reproduction. As I have described in the previous chapter, the myth of Kamberap's sacrifice offers a resolution to problems associated with unrequited reciprocity. It also constructs a model of social reproduction that operates through the indirect exchange of women and valuables, suggesting that the processes of reciprocity through which society is constructed are

themselves dependent on the presence of two kinds of gendered bodies.

The argument that emerges from this interpretation of yawat is that through the process of attributing gender to bodies, the human body becomes an organizing trope for both sexual and social reproduction. More concretely, yawat has to do with the "making of men" in both the reproductive sense (i.e. men who can become fathers) and in the sociological sense. This is experienced through numinous sounds and dangerous smells, through participation in a symbolic cannibal feast, through isolation and restriction, and through the communication of myth. Finally, even through repeated participation in the cult, no privileged interpretation of its meanings emerges; the participant's experience and knowledge are continually subject to transformation.

**Chapter Twelve: Cult and Cargo**

Are you an ancestor, a spirit, or a real man?

-- question to the anthropologist

**Introduction: The Wake of the Flood**

A few days after I arrived in Dome village for the first time, I was led into the rain forest to the site of an earlier yawat cult ceremony. About a dozen men were present. One man cut two lengths of bamboo and made a pair of flutes, while a second man carved a bullroarer from a piece of wood. When the instruments were completed, one man swung the bullroarer, another blew the paired flutes, and the other men sang verses from yawat. Kati told me the following story, which begins where the myth of Kamberap's sacrifice ends:

The people finished the arat pig feast and were thirsty, but there was no water to drink. Someone noticed that a dog had water on its muzzle, so they told a lizard to follow the dog and see where it was drinking.

The dog went down to the taro swamp and moved aside the leaves to drink from the water underneath. The lizard saw where the dog found water and returned to tell the people.

When the people went down to the taro swamp and pushed aside the leaves, the water came pouring out. The swamp began filling with water and the people cut down trees and built a dam. The water kept rising and finally broke the dam, causing a flood.

The current was so strong that a number of people were swept downstream in its wake. They were carried a great distance and the color of their skin washed away, leaving them white. One man carried the bullroarer

from yawat with him. The white people used its sound to make engines for boats, trucks, and planes.

Kamberap was one of the men carried downstream. He wrote a letter on a leaf to his brother-in-law, inviting Kaim to join him. Kaim could not read the note, however, so he stayed where he was.

Kaim and the other men who stayed behind are the Yonggom. The men who were washed downstream are the Europeans. This is why the Europeans have motors and machines. The Europeans have an easy life, while the Yonggom must work hard to survive.

The Yonggom and the Europeans are brothers. The Yonggom are the first people; they are the older brothers and the Europeans are the younger brothers.

The myth describing the wake of the flood elaborates upon the the corpus of myths associated with the yawat cult and makes statements about "cargo" and the relationships between the Yonggom and Europeans. In this chapter, I discuss this myth and other aspects of the idea of cargo among the Yonggom. I adopt a historical point of view and examine how Yonggom ideas about cargo have changed through time. My argument is that different forms of cargo activities among the Yonggom share concerns about reciprocity.

### **Cargo and Colonialism**

Recently anthropologists have begun to reconsider Melanesian cargo cults, suggesting that they are responses to and critiques of the kinds of relations imposed by colonial and capitalist systems (Kelly and Kaplan 1989). According to this view, the unusual features of cargo cults

reveal the ironies and contradictions produced by colonial governments and capitalist economies. Appadurai (1986), for example, has suggested that cargo cults comprise a species of mythology about global commodity flows. Myths about cargo reflect the alienation of Melanesians from the production and distribution of commodities which are taken as "metonymic of a whole system of power, prosperity, and status" (*ibid*:52). Cargo myths are indigenous critiques of their exclusion from this system.

That a Melanesian critique of relations imposed by colonial and capitalist systems should take the form of myths about exchange follows directly from the significance of reciprocity in Melanesia. Not only is exchange conceived of as constructing social relationships through transactions, but reciprocity is fundamentally involved in the construction of the self. Relations that are not mediated by reciprocity have the capacity to threaten one's definition of self. Thus in their classic form, cargo cult myths seek to represent the conditions under which relations between Melanesians and Europeans would be governed by reciprocity.

McDowell (1988:23) has recently questioned whether cargo cults are an "analytically separable category" of activity rather than "one manifestation of a particular way of constructing the world, acting in it, and deriving meaning from it." She notes the difficulty in

distinguishing between cargo cults and certain religious movements, business ventures, and political activities, suggesting that an episodic (or discontinuous) view of change, a concept she borrows from Gellner (1964), links these disparate activities together, not the notion of cargo.

Among the Yonggom, however, one way in which different manifestations of cargo ideology are connected is through myths associated with the yawat cult. Furthermore, while Yonggom cargo cults do sometimes involve an episodic view of history, this does not seem to be their defining feature. Many years ago Peter Lawrence (1964) showed how cargo cults take different forms during different historical periods. In this chapter, I follow this approach and compare the different forms which Yonggom ideas about cargo have taken since the 1950's. In contrast to McDowell, I suggest that the different manifestations of Yonggom cargo cults are related to the historical circumstances in which they emerge. Yonggom cargo cults share concerns about reciprocity and critique the kinds of relationships imposed by colonial, post-colonial, and capitalist systems.

#### **Early Cargo Movements among the Yonggom**

The background to the earliest Yonggom cargo cults, which took place in 1951 and 1952, involved changing

economic and political conditions (see Chapter 2).<sup>1</sup> The Dutch government had increased its presence in Mindiptanah and Tanah Merah, and this led to increased demand for a variety of Western commodities, including steel tools, cloth, salt, tea, tobacco, and matches (Schoorl n.d.). This efflorescence of interest in trade goods is reflected in den Haan's (1955) description of pig feasts held in the Yonggom-Mandobo region in the early 1950's. Several thousand people attended the largest of these feasts, even though only a small number of pigs, perhaps as few as thirty, were slaughtered. This ratio between guests and pigs suggests that the major attraction to the feasts was not the exchange of cowrie shell valuables for pork, but the opportunity to engage in the trade of Western commodities, which were becoming more accessible as a result of colonial activity in the region.<sup>2</sup>

The cargo cults which took place among the Yonggom in 1951 and 1952 involved ritual attempts at transforming mundane objects into cowrie shell valuables (*od*). The rituals can be seen as responses to the disruption of local exchange dynamics caused by the increased availability of and demand for Western commodities. The Yonggom were

---

<sup>1</sup>For the description of these early cargo cults, I rely on Schoorl (1978).

<sup>2</sup>In contrast, the pig feasts that I attended in the 1980's had a ratio of one pig for every ten or fifteen people in attendance.

confronted by what Brunton (1971) referred to as the egalitarian dilemma of how to maintain equivalence when exchange values are in flux. The resulting difficulty in settling debts presumably caused the Yonggom to feel increasingly vulnerable to attacks of sorcery. These initial cargo cults were attempts to generate wealth within the confines of the local exchange system in order to stabilize exchange values and to satisfy exchange demands and maintain reciprocity among the Yonggom. The cargo rituals attempted to revive the traditional exchange system, but did not seek to articulate this system to the larger economic context.

By 1953, a new cargo movement, which was much broader in orientation, had begun. The movement consisted largely of a number of written demands which were explicitly critical of the Dutch colonial administration. The movement criticized Western notions of exclusive ownership of property by claiming that Western commodities had their origin among the Yonggom, but had been spirited away by the government. The movement was critical of the alignment of the Catholic Church with the colonial administration, arguing that the Catholic priests were withholding vital knowledge about Christianity and the acquisition of wealth. Concern about the disruption of exchange processes arose again, this time formulated in terms of the acquisition of foreign currency rather than local valuables. The movement

demanded that the Dutch government instruct the other countries of the world to send barrels of money to the Yonggom, or to establish "money factories" on Yonggom territory.

The movement challenged the administration's economic policies and sought reform. They demanded that the prices of all Western commodities be fixed at lower rates, that income taxes be abolished, and that wages from local policeman and soldiers be increased. The cult leaders asked the government to build factories for hardware, tools, weapons, and other commodities the Yonggom desired.<sup>3</sup> They requested that all foreigners except the Dutch be expelled so that the Yonggom could take over their jobs and businesses.

The movement also sought to establish a new "Kompenie," the term used for the Dutch administration. When this new "Kompenie" was established, social hierarchy imposed by the old "Kompenie" would vanish and the Yonggom would also become duan (Malay tuan), the term of address reserved for European men. The Yonggom would no longer be overworked and food would be plenty. One of the stated goals of the movement was to live together without "deceiving... [one's] neighbor" (Schoorl 1978:17). Complete equality would be

---

<sup>3</sup>The Malay term pabrik, derived from the Dutch fabrik, is still associated with cargo cult activity in Irian Jaya today (Giay and Godschalk n.d.). The connotations of pabrik differ somewhat from the standard connotations of the term "factory."

achieved and the Yonggom "would not die any longer" (ibid:16).

The movement was thus not only a critique of the economic policies implemented by the colonial administration, but it also articulated a vision of a new social order.

### **Cargo and the Dynamics of Local Exchange**

What do cargo cults strive to achieve in terms of local exchange processes? Among the Yonggom, who lack "big men" and competitive exchange and whose values are strongly egalitarian, cargo signifies the opportunity to resolve problems associated with the traditional exchange system. As I have described, to the Yonggom inequality is considered disturbing and potentially dangerous. It has a moral connotation equivalent to the refusal to exchange and is virtually synonymous with unrequited reciprocity and the implicit denial of the humanity of the other. Inequality produces resentment and anger, emotions which are considered to motivate acts of sorcery. One of the aims of equality among the Yonggom is to limit sorcery and thus illness and death.

It is of significance that the Yonggom frequently commented to me that Europeans have much longer life expectancies than do the Yonggom. The discrepancy is sometimes expressed in terms of the fact that many adult

Europeans have living grandparents, which is rather unusual among the Yonggom. One of the examples that the Yonggom use to describe *mimyop* (sorrow and loss) is "not having an grandmother." They usually do not attribute this difference in longevity to Western technology or medicine, but to the presence of sorcery among the Yonggom. The difference in life expectancy between the populations is as much a source of concern to the Yonggom as any material form of cargo.

One of the images common to Melanesian cargo cults is a situation in which there is sufficient money or valuables to flood the local exchange system. This image may be criticized for demonstrating a lack of understanding of one of the basic principles of economics, that anything which is universally available in unlimited quantities will have little or no value in exchange. However, the logic of the image of a flooded exchange system is consistent with one of the primary aims of cargo activity.

An unlimited and unrestricted supply of valuables would allow the Yonggom to settle all their debts at face value and equalize all of their relationships.<sup>4</sup> In this idealized state of affairs, there would be no cause for resentment or anger, and no disputes would arise out of entanglements involving exchange. More importantly, there would be no cause for sorcery. This is the sense of the claims made in

---

<sup>4</sup>Cf: the Tangu notion of mngwotngwotiki or equivalence (Burridge 1960).

1953 that once the new "Kompenie" is established, everyone will be equal, no one will have need of deceiving his neighbor, and no one will die.

Throughout most of Melanesia, the end of warfare was met with almost a universal sense of great relief (despite the eventual resurgence of fighting in parts of the highlands). One explanation for this is that the presence of colonial administrations gave the people of Melanesia the opportunity to extricate themselves from a process in which they were enmeshed against their will (Koch 1974). The great wealth revealed through colonial contact was similarly interpreted by the Yonggom as offering the opportunity to escape the onerous consequences of sorcery, which are seen as the result of conflict over matters of exchange. This cargo movement was thus critical of how the Yonggom have been prevented from taking advantage of the new opportunities represented by the great wealth of the colonial powers (cf: Burridge 1969).

### **Myth and Cargo**

Between the time of Schoorl's research in Netherlands New Guinea in the mid-1950's and my own research in Papua New Guinea in the 1980's, the myth of the flood changed significantly. In the version of the myth recorded by Schoorl (n.d.), there is no mention of Europeans or their

technology. After the people went to the taro swamp to drink, the water began to rise and the people:

tried in vain to dam it. Fishes appeared, including *Tonkiruk* [catfish], a very big one whom they speared. He fled to the north, taking all the water with him, only to return very quickly, with thundering force. By turning the humming board and blowing the flute, they tried to stop the water, but it merely rushed past the spots where they stood, thus forming the islands in the Kao river. All rivers arose from this event... A number of guests were swept along by the water, others managed to hang on, and these became the ancestors of the Muyu [or Yonggom] (Schoorl n.d.).

According to Schoorl, the myth ends here. The events in the "wake of the flood" described in the myth presented at the beginning of this chapter are thus innovations upon the myth told to Schoorl. The later version of the myth of the flood represents another development of cargo ideas among the Yonggom.

In the myth, an analogy links cargo in the form of technology to the sound-producing instruments of the Yonggom yawat cult, particularly the bullroarer. The analogy is based in part on the similarity between the sounds produced by the bullroarer and those made by European motors, engines, and other machines.

Whereas the yawat cult is based on the original acquisition of the sound-producing instruments from women, who no longer know the secrets of their use, the myth of the wake of the flood suggests that Western technology is based on the acquisition of the same instruments from the yawat cult, whose members of which are now ignorant of the way in

which the instruments are used to make machines. The myth focuses on the sound of technology as metonymic of the complex of power associated with colonial and capitalist systems.

Europeans are thus in control of technology even though its source was the Yonggom. As Marilyn Strathern (1988) has argued in The Gender of the Gift, Melanesian ideas about possession differ from the Western model of ownership, in which transactions separate objects from persons and attach them to other persons. In Melanesia, exchange creates links between persons through objects. Persons remain associated with the objects they transact. Thus in this form of cargo activity, the Yonggom claim that they should have equal use of technology controlled by Europeans.

Furthermore, since the myth of Kamberap's sacrifice is about the resolution of problems associated with unrequited reciprocity, it is entirely appropriate that cargo myths are drawn from yawat. If Kamberap's sacrifice is a myth of salvation, the myth of the wake of the flood can be seen as the attempt to extend this solution to problems associated with cargo as well.

#### **The Return of the Ancestors**

A few days after I had been taken to see the yawat cult objects in 1986, I met Kobarara, a refugee from Kawangtet village in Irian Jaya, for the first time. He knew that the

men from the village had shown me the cult sound-producing instruments. With the help of a translator, Kobarara repeated the story of the flood. When he finished, he asked me why I had come to Dome. I told him that I had come to learn about Yonggom language, history, and customs.

Kobarara then told me another story, which begins after the myth about the wake of the flood:

After Kamberap was carried downstream, he had a son. The son's name is Katum Kamberap. He has white skin like a European, but curly hair like a Papuan. He is very powerful; he holds the world in his hand like a small piece of earth. During the day he is a wooden carving, but at night he turns back into a man.

Katum Kamberap came back to Kawangtet village (in Irian Jaya, Kobarara's village), but the people there were surprised by him, so he ran away. A pastor on a motorcycle picked him up and brought him to the Catholic mission in Ninati (also in Irian Jaya). The mission forced Katum Kamberap to stay with them.

Once the Indonesians tried to take Katum Kamberap away from the mission, but the priests would not allow them to do so. Finally Katum Kamberap threatened to turn the whole world into water, so the Indonesians left him alone. We heard that he left Ambitkibi not long after we crossed into Papua New Guinea, so we have been waiting.

After he told me the story, Kobarara said, "I came to see you because I thought that you might be Katum Kamberap." The myth of Kamberap's son draws on the earlier yawat myths and is more specifically concerned with the problems associated with the Indonesian presence in Irian Jaya and the refugee movement into Papua New Guinea in 1984 (see Chapter 2). Whereas previous ideas about cargo were concerned with the social aspects of exchange, the myth of

Kamberap's son marks a transformation to ideas about cargo in terms of politics.

By analogy with Appadurai's (1986) argument that cargo myths about exchange reflect the alienation of Melanesians from economic production and distribution, the myth about Kamberap's son reflects the alienation of the Yonggom from political power. From the beginning of the colonial era, the Yonggom have been governed by many different powers, including Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. The myth of Kamberap's son can be seen as an attempt to find a solution to the political disempowerment of the Yonggom, and particularly the refugees.

It is significant that the myth has no conclusion. In waiting for Katum Kamberap, the refugees are seeking a way to extend their mythological narrative into the present (cf: Leenhardt 1979 and Young 1983). I observed two different attempts at extending the myth into the present in response to the refugee situation. The first draws on Christianity. Sometimes in telling their myths, the Yonggom incorporate characters drawn from either the Old or the New Testament. One version of a cult myth includes a man named Diat, who I was told is Jesus.<sup>5</sup> In this myth:

Diat shot a fish and a prawn. Another man cooked these for him... [but] Diat ate only the fish. If he had taken the prawn, men would die, but then would shed

---

<sup>5</sup>In other versions of this myth, he is known as Digore.

their skin [like a prawn] and come back to life. But he took the fish, so people do not come back to life and must live with sorrow.

After eating, Diat went away, calling, "Can you see me?" One man said "yes," but he was too busy preparing his pipe to smoke to really see. Diat went away and now he is staying at a place called Muyukaba in Irian Jaya.

The myth equates the story of Katum Kamberap with the second coming of Christ. As such, it can be seen as an attempt to extend the myth of Katum Kamberap into the present, while also universalizing concern for the refugees.

The second attempt to extend the myth of Katum Kamberap involved my own presence among the Yonggom. Long after my first visit to the village and my initial encounter with Kobarara, many people still had questions about my identity.

One man living in Dome Refugee Camp brought me a map that he had drawn of the trail between the villages along the Muyu River in Irian Jaya and Kungim village in Papua New Guinea. This was the path taken by the refugees when they left Irian Jaya in 1984. A few days later he returned to my house with a list of names. The list began with the Indonesian words Dasar Moyang, the "base" or "foundation" of his ancestors, and also listed his clan, the animal species associated with his clan, and the names of his family members. The list ended with the names of several ascending generations of his patrilineage.

Elias, a Yonggom teacher at Dome community school, said that the refugee was engaged in "cargo cult thinking" and

wanted me to deliver "cargo" to his village in Irian Jaya. Elias suggested that the list of names was to facilitate the distribution of the cargo. According to Elias, many of the villagers with whom I regularly visited and shared meals had similar ideas about me. Some of them had suggested to Elias that I might be an ancestor who had come back to see my place of origin and to find out how my Yonggom relatives were faring.

For some refugees, these diffuse ideas gained focus through the myth of Kamberap's son. Kobarara's interest in my relationship to this mythological figure remained an issue throughout my stay in Dome. As I was preparing to leave the village for the last time, a leader in the refugee camp, someone with whom I had met and had spoken with on numerous occasions, came to see me with a question. He asked me whether I was an ancestor (*aamgono*), a spirit person (*kinggen*), or truly a man (*karup anam*)?

He said that the refugees had been talking about my presence in the village and wanted to know why I was there. Was I there to help them gain independence? He also told me that the reason the refugees helped arrange for me to attend *yawat* was linked to these questions about my identity. We began talking about *yawat* and he explained how Katum

Kamberap:

*came to Derikaba [the confluence of the Fly and Ok Tedi Rivers] and later moved to Yimkaba [a creek between Yogi and Kamokpin villages]. Then he went to Kimbut [a*

ketbon or sacred place] before going to Ambitkibi<sup>6</sup> and staying there.

Finally, he asked me whether I knew the story and told me that I looked just like Katum Kamberap. He was thus offering me a "gift of information" endowed with exchange (Battaglia n.d.a), which challenged me to reciprocate through participation in the extension of the myth of Kamberap's son.

These two efforts to extend the myth of Katum Kamberap into the present are attempts to find a solution to the political disempowerment of the Yonggom refugees. They constitute another development of cargo ideas among the Yonggom.

#### **Conclusions: Cult and Cargo**

In this chapter, I have examined the different forms that Yonggom ideas about cargo have taken. Earlier I referred to McDowell's (1988) claim that the unifying theme of what anthropologists call cargo cults is an episodic view of history. In contrast, I suggested that Yonggom cargo cults are concerned with reciprocity and that the particular forms that these activities take is related to the historical contexts in which they emerge. In particular, Yonggom cargo cults are critical of the kinds of relations

---

<sup>6</sup>Ambitkibi is a *ketbon* (or sacred place) close to Kawangtet village and the place where the sacrifice of Kamberap is said to have occurred.

imposed upon them by colonial, post-colonial, and capitalist systems. For the Yonggom, to whom unrequited reciprocity is considered a fundamental challenge to one's humanity, cargo cults represent the attempt to resist and overcome such challenges.

#### **Epilogue: Strangers and Friends**

Kobarara, the refugee who sought me out during my first visit to Dome to tell me the myth of Katum Kamberap, continued to question my reasons for being in the village throughout my stay. At the same time, not only did I grow fond of him, but I frequently sought him out for conversations about different aspects of Yonggom culture. Although our relationship was generally quite amicable, on several occasions we reached an impasse. After a discussion about some matter of interest to me, Kobarara would carefully address me, saying,

Now that I've helped you and answered your questions, it is my turn to ask you a question. Am I going to live to see my own land [in Irian Jaya] again, or will I die in Papua New Guinea?

Each time he asked me this question, I answered as truthfully as I could, saying that I was sorry, but that I did not know the answer to his question. I knew that this was not the answer he wished to hear and his response was to lose patience with me, scowling as though I had refused a request to reciprocate his help. After these confrontations, Kobarara often would retreat into the rain

forest along the border and I would not see him again for weeks or months.

To Kobarara, my gifts of food and tobacco were trivial. He shared his knowledge and understanding with me and expected me to reciprocate in kind. He was sure that I had knowledge about the future of the refugees and Irian Jaya that I was withholding from him. Perhaps he hoped that much as he had been a source of insight into Yonggom culture for me, that I could provide him with similar insights into the political future of the region.

Towards the end of my stay, Kobarara and I were again discussing the myth of Kamberap. Once again he describe Kamberap's son to me, this time incorporating some of my physical features into the description. Finally Kobarara asked me one last time about his fate. This time I changed my answer and reassured him that he would be able to return home to Irian Jaya. When he heard my answer, he became overwrought with emotion and began to cry.

To Kobarara, my refusal to provide him with an answer to his question was a rejection of our relationship and transformed his assistance into acts of unrequited reciprocity. By offering him an answer, I had finally reciprocated his gifts of information and had acknowledged the relationship between us.

## Conclusions

This ethnography is organized as an account of Yonggom sorcery, magic, and cult ritual. Through the examination of these institutions, it also explores three important cultural processes among the Yonggom.

Indeterminacy is a strategic resource in social relations and the construction of meaning. Yonggom sorcery divination operates not through the establishment of consensus, but rather by the avoidance of it. Indeterminate results of divination limit violent responses against sorcerers. Ambiguous objects and words of uncertain meaning are considered to have magical power. Indeterminacy surrounds the "use" of Yonggom "magic for the impossible." The yawat cult is organized recursively and the transformations of its arguments contribute to the indeterminacy of meaning.

Another process is based on the idea of unrequited reciprocity, which the Yonggom interpret as a challenge to one's humanity. In myths about unrequited reciprocity, people who are refused food become animals. Unrequited reciprocity is also seen as providing motivation for acts of sorcery.

Reciprocity is also important in the definition of emotions. *Mimyop*, for example, is conceptualized in terms of sorrow and loss. The resolution of feelings of sorrow is dependent upon obtaining replacement or compensation. Feelings of *mimyop* thus initiate a social dynamic in which one seeks to recover, replace, or gain compensation for that which

has been lost. Other emotions gain definition through their association with sorcery, such as the ethos of trickery and deceit, which is dramatized in scenarios that attempt to explain sorcery.

Yawat cult myth and ritual have the power to resolve the challenges posed to the social order by unrequited reciprocity. The cult can be seen as a founding act of society, both in terms of its re-institution of social relations through marriage exchange, and through its incorporation of novices into the social order. Kamberap's sacrifice can be seen as an act of redemption or salvation, resolving the problem of unrequited reciprocity.

Yonggom ideas about cargo similarly express concern about reciprocity and the kinds of relationships imposed by colonial, post-colonial, and capitalist systems. Even though Yonggom cargo cults take different forms according to the historical period in which they appear, they all attempt to resist and overcome the challenge of unrequited reciprocity. Political activity among the refugees draws on the resources of the yawat cult and attempt to extend yawat myths into the present.

The third process examined in this dissertation involves the creation of meaning through the metaphorical supplementation of natural images. Natural images can evoke strong feelings, such as a flowering sago palm, which elicits feelings of *mimyop* (sorrow and loss) associated with

senescence and death; or the hooded butcherbird, whose cry in the morning reminds one of the deceased. The relationship between metaphor and natural image is illustrated in the interpretation of dreams, in patterns of distinguishing persons and groups, in the relationship between language and the objects the Yonggom produce, in the categorization of sensory experience, and in magic. Cassowary magic, for example, may have an impact on women, because cassowaries are considered ideal natural counterparts to women. Through the metaphorical supplementation of the natural image of a cassowary as a human counterpart, the *dobonggon*, which is half-man and half-cassowary, is considered capable of making magical contributions to success.

In discussing a number of different kinds of Yonggom magic, I suggested that Yonggom magic may best be defined in terms of the quality of effects that it attempts to achieve. I argued that Yonggom magic is intended to modify the quality of events, rather than to cause them to happen. It influences events in an adverbial manner, contributing to the generalized opportunity for success.

I also described several examples of Yonggom magic "for the impossible." I suggested that such magic is apocryphal and exists only in stories or inferences about its use, raising questions about the extent to which the "use" of magic is inferred. Although anthropologists readily acknowledge that there is no necessary relation between the attribution of

a death to sorcery and the actual performance of acts of sorcery, they have not extended this same insight to magic.

Natural images may be drawn from a range of sensory experience, and in the yawat cult, numinous sounds and dangerous smells convey ideas about sex, gender, and fertility. The smell that links menstruating women and men returning from yawat is said to be shared by the brush fowl, which incubates its eggs beneath a mound of decaying leaves. The revelation of the bullroarers and other sound-producing instruments to initiates does not diminish the numinous qualities of the sounds they produce.

I proposed a recursive model of ritual to account for the indeterminacy of meaning within yawat. The ritual takes itself as its own object, and meaning produced at a given moment may later seem false or even paradoxical. The argument that emerges from this interpretation of yawat is that through the process of attributing gender to bodies, the human body becomes an organizing trope for both sexual and social reproduction. This is experience through the numinous sounds and dangerous smells, through participation in the symbolic cannibal feast, through isolation and restriction, and through the communication of myth. Even through repeated participation in the cult, no privileged interpretation of its meanings emerges; the experience and knowledge of participants is continually subject to transformation.

A final concern is both methodological and

epistemological. I have made use of a reflexive point of view when considering issues associated with the representation of culture and its presentation to the anthropologist, including questions about the "use" of magic, my participation in yawat, and my involvement in cargo activities among the refugees.

### Appendix One: Annual Temperature and Rainfall

#### A. Lack of Significant Seasonal Temperature Variation

Mean Monthly Maximum Temperature (F)

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Avg
Temp	90	89	90	89	87	86	84	85	87	90	91	90	88F
%	102	101	102	101	99	98	95	97	99	102	103	102	---

% - percentiles

**Conclusions:** The months May through September are slightly cooler (4F) than the other months of the year, but there is little seasonal temperature variation.

Data recorded over five years at Tanahmerah, from the Nederlands-Nieuw Guinea Meteorologisch en Geofysisch Bur. (1962), cited in Paijmans et al. (1971:50).

#### B. Lack of Significant Seasonal Variation in Rainfall (in centimeters)

Site	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Tota
Kiu	46	48	71	32	38	33	22	41	27	29	31	31	449
Atk	45	36	67	39	41	36	23	33	36	36	24	36	452
Nin	48	40	42	49	62	52	64	55	65	39	38	46	600
Tota	139	124	180	120	141	121	109	129	128	104	93	113	1501
%	111	99	144	96	113	97	87	103	102	83	74	90	---

Kiu - Kiunga 1963-1967 (Paijman et al. 1971).

Atk - Atkamba 1962-1967 (Paijman et al. 1971).

Nin - Ninati 1951-1960 (Brookfield and Hart 1966)

% - percentage of annual monthly rainfall

**Conclusions:** While March stands out as the month of heaviest rainfall and October and November as the months of the least rain, there is little seasonal variation in rainfall during the year.

**Appendix Two: Birds Mentioned in Text**

<b>Yonggom</b>	<b>English common</b>	<b>Latin</b>
<i>on arek</i>	Eclectus Parrot (male)	<u>Eclectus roratus</u>
<i>on ayam</i>	Chicken ( <u>ayam</u> = Malay)	-----
<i>on beren</i>	Crested Bird of Paradise	<u>Cnemophilus macgregorii</u>
<i>on dokdok</i>	Large-Tailed Nightjar	<u>Caprimulgus macrurus</u>
<i>on eet</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet	<u>Trichoglossus haematodus</u>
<i>on kambep</i>	Brahminy Kite	<u>Haliastur indus</u>
<i>on kanggi</i>	Tiger Parrot	<u>Psittacella madaraszi</u>
<i>on kaputi</i>	Palm Cockatoo	<u>Probosciger aterrimus</u>
<i>on karon</i>	Rufous-Bellied Kookaburra	<u>Dacelo gaudichaud</u>
<i>on kawa</i>	Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo	<u>Cacatua galerita</u>
<i>on kevet</i>	Papuan Hornbill	<u>Rhyticeros plicatus</u>
<i>on kuni</i>	Hooded Butcherbird	<u>Cracticus cassicus</u>
<i>on kurim</i>	Guria, Southern- Crowned Pigeon	<u>Goura scheepmakeri</u>
<i>on mangganok</i>	Noisy Friarbird	<u>Philemon buceroides</u>
<i>on mimgun</i>	Feline Owlet- Nightjar	<u>Aegotheles insignis</u>
<i>on monowan</i>	Brown-Collared Brush Turkey	<u>Tallegalla jobiensis</u>
<i>on munggut</i>	Eclectus Parrot (female)	<u>Eclectus roratus</u>
<i>on ome</i>	Owl	<u>Tyto tenobricosa</u> <u>Ninox sp.</u>
<i>on yeem</i>	Meliphaga	<u>Meliphaga spp.</u>

<i>on yowom,</i> <i>on maim</i>	Flying Fox	<u>Pteropus spp.</u>
<i>ono</i> <sup>1</sup>	Greater Bird of Paradise	<u>Paradisaea apoda</u>
<i>ono</i>	Raggiana Bird of Paradise	<u>Paradisaea raggiana</u>
<i>on wiit</i>	Western Black- Capped Lorry	<u>Lorius lory</u>
<i>on wawute</i>	Rufous Babbler	<u>Pomatostomus isidorei</u>
<i>on orak</i>	Rail	<u>Rallina sp.</u>
<i>on yuonkiip</i>	Flycatcher	<u>Microeca sp.</u>
-----	Australian Pelican	<u>Pelacanus conspicillatus</u>
<i>diap</i>	Southern Cassowary	<u>Casuarius casuarius</u>

Source: Beehler et al. (1986).

---

<sup>1</sup>In this region, Raggiana and Greater birds of paradise are probably conspecific (Beehler et al. 1986).

## Appendix Three: Primary Cultigens

Yonggom	English common	Latin
<i>om</i>	Sago	<u>Metroxylon sagu</u>
<i>yum</i>	Banana	<u>Musa</u> sp.
<i>yemen</i>	Swamp Taro	<u>Cyrtosperma chamissonis</u>
<u>taro tru</u> (P)	True Taro (IR)	<u>Colocasia esculenta</u>
<u>taro kong</u> <u>kong</u> (P)	Taro (IR)	<u>Xanthosoma</u> sp.
<i>bum</i>	Yam	<u>Dioscora</u> sp.
<i>omanop,</i> <i>boteng</i>	Sweet Potato (IU)	<u>Ipomoea batatas</u>
<u>ubi</u> (M)	Cassava (IR)	<u>Manihot esculentus</u>
<i>away</i>	Okari	<u>Terminalis</u> sp.
<i>aim</i>	Lowland Pandanus (Marita)	<u>Pandanus conoideus</u>
<i>aup</i>	Tobacco (IU)	<u>Nicotiana tabacum</u>
<i>auup</i>	Lowland Pitpit	<u>Saccharum edule</u>
<i>awit</i>	Sugar Cane	<u>Saccharum officinarum</u>
<i>kanat</i>	Pineapple (IR)	<u>Ananas</u> sp.
<i>kawak</i>	Breadfruit	<u>Autocarpus incisus</u>
<i>orom</i>	Coconut (IR)	<u>Cocas nucifera</u>
<i>kamak</i>	Ginger	<u>Zingiber</u> sp.
<u>chili</u> (M)	Chili Pepper (IR)	<u>Capiscum frutescens</u>
<i>arup demot</i>	Aibika (Hibiscus)	<u>Hibiscus manihot</u>

**Key:** (E) English, (M) Malay/Indonesian, (P) Melanesian Pidgin, (IR) Recent introduction, (IU) Introduction -- time uncertain.

<u>pumpkin</u> (E)	Pumpkin (IR)	<u>Cucurbita pepo</u>
<u>milon</u> (P)	Watermelon (IR)	-----
<u>katang</u>	Winged Beans	<u>Psophocarpus tetragonolobus</u>
<u>lacusina</u> (M)	Loufah (IR)	<u>Luffa</u> sp.
<u>papayang</u> (M)	Papaya (IR)	<u>Carica papaya</u>
<u>mentimum</u> (M)	Cucumber (IR)	<u>Cucumis sativus</u>
<u>pinut</u> (P)	Peanut (IR)	<u>Arachis hypogaea</u>

**Key:** (E) English, (M) Malay/Indonesian, (P) Melanesian Pidgin, (IR) Recent introduction, (IU) Introduction -- time uncertain.

Sources include: Barrau (1958), Dwyer (1990), Merrill (1954), and May (1984).

## Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila

1986. Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Abu-Lughod, Lila and Catherine A. Lutz

1990. "Introduction: Emotion, Discourse, and the Politics of Everyday Life." In Language and the Politics of Emotion, edited by Catherine A. Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod.

Allen, Catherine J.

1988. The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Anonymous

1921. "Investigation into the Deaths of Bell and Drexler, 1920-21. File #R/253/21. Papua New Guinea National Archives, Waigani, Papua New Guinea.

Appadurai, Arjun

1986. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." In Arjun Appadurai, editor, The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective. New York: Cambridge Press.

Austen, Leo

1922a "Report of a Patrol of the Tedi (Alice) River and the Star Mountains, Western District." Territory of Papua, Annual Report for 1921-2, pps. 122-134.

1922b "The Tedi (Alice) River Country and the People Inhabiting It." Territory of Papua, Annual Report for 1921-2, pps. 134-140.

1922c "Comparative Vocabularies of the Upper Fly River Villages." Territory of Papua, Annual Report for 1921-2, p. 163.

1922d Letter of September 5, to the Resident Magistrate of the Western District, pps. 1-4. Papua New Guinea National Archives, Waigani, Papua New Guinea.

1922e Letter of April 14, written to the Resident Magistrate of the Western District, pps. 1-2. Papua New Guinea National Archives, Waigani, Papua New Guinea.

1923. "The Tedi River District of Papua." The Geographical Journal. 62:335-349.

- Baal, Jan van  
1966. Dema: Description and Analysis of Marind-anim Culture (South New Guinea). With the Collaboration of Father J. Verschueren. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Baker, J.C.  
1953-54. Patrol Report of 1953-54. Provincial Archives of Western Province, Daru.
- Barrau, Jacques  
1958. Subsistence Agriculture in Melanesia. Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Bulletin 219. Honolulu: The Bishop Museum.
- Bartel, J.R.  
n.d. "A Statement of the Phonemes of 'Yongkom.'" Unpublished Mimeo, Unevangelized Fields Mission.
- Barth, Fredrik  
1975. Ritual and Knowledge among the Baktaman of New Guinea. New Haven: Yale University Press.
1987. Cosmologies in the Making: A Generative Approach to Cultural Variation in Inner New Guinea. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bateson, Gregory  
1936. Naven. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Battaglia, Debora  
1990. On the Bones of the Serpent: Person, Memory, and Mortality among Sabarl Islanders. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- n.d.a "Displacing Culture: A Joke of Significance in Urban New Guinea." New Literary History, in press.
- n.d.b "The Body in the Gift: Memory and Forgetting in Sabarl Mortuary Exchange." American Ethnologist, in press.
- Beehler, Bruce M.  
1989. "The Birds of Paradise." Scientific American. 262(6):116-123.
- Beehler, Bruce M., Thane K. Pratt, and Dale A. Zimmerman  
1986. Birds of New Guinea. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Handbook No. 9 of the Wau Ecology Institute.
- Benedict, Ruth  
1934. Patterns of Culture. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Bercovitch, Eytan

1989a Disclosure and Concealment: A Study of Secrecy among the Nalumin People of Papua New Guinea. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University.

1989b "Mortal Insights: Victim and Witch in the Nalumin Imagination." In The Varieties of Religious Experience in New Guinea, edited by Gilbert Herdt and Michele Stephens. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Bible Society of Papua New Guinea, The

1987. God ye Weng: Amob yeeb Yongkom Weng. (Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Galatians, Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timoty, Philemon, and James in Yongkom). Port Moresby: Bible Society of Papua New Guinea.

Boelaars, J.H.M.C.

1950. The Linguistic Position of South-Western New Guinea. Leiden: Brill.

1969. "The Religion of the Mandobo." In Josef Glazik, editor, Zeitschrift Fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft. Munster: Verlag Aschendorff.

Bourdieu, Pierre

1977. Outline of a Theory of Practice. Translated by Richard Nice. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brandes, E.W.

1929. "Into Primeval Papua by Seaplane." The National Geographic Magazine. 56(3):253-332.

Briggs, Jean L.

1970. Never in Anger: A Portrait of an Eskimo Family. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Brookfield, H.C. and Hart, D.

1966. Rainfall in the Tropical Southwest Pacific. Canberra: Department of Geography Publication G/3, Australian National University.

1971. Melanesia: A Geographical Interpretation of an Island World. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Brongersma, L.D. and G.F. Venema

1962. To the Mountains of the Stars. Translated by Alan G. Readett. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Brown, Paula

1978. Highland People of New Guinea. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brumbaugh, Robert

1980. A Secret Cult in the West Sepik Highlands. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

1990. "Afek Sang: The 'Old Woman' Myth of the Mountain-Ok." Barry Craig and David Hyndman, editors, Children of Afek: Tradition and Change among the Mountain Ok of Central New Guinea. Oceania Monograph no. 40. Sydney: University of Sydney.

Brunton, Ron

1971. "Cargo Cults and Systems of Exchange in Melanesia." Mankind. 8:15-28.

1980. "Misconstrued Order in Melanesian Religion." Man. 15:112-128.

Bulmer, Ralph

1967. "Why is the Cassowary Not a Bird?" Man 2:5-25.

Burridge, K.O.L.

1960. Mambu: A Melanesian Millenium. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

1969. New Heaven New Earth: A Study in Millenarian Activities. New York: Schocken Books.

Busse, Mark

1987. Sister Exchange among the Wamek of the Middle Fly. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, San Diego.

Campbell, Stuart

1938. "The Country between the Headwaters of the Fly and Sepik Rivers." Geographic Journal 92:232-258.

Casadgrande, Joseph B. (editor)

1960. In the Company of Man: Twenty Portraits of Anthropological Informants. New York: Harper & Row.

Clifford, James

1983. "On Ethnographic Authority." Representations 1:118-146.

1988. The Predicament of Culture. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Clifford, James and George E. Marcus  
1986. Writing Culture: The poetics and the Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California.
- Craig, Barry  
1988. Art and Decoration of Central New Guinea. Aylesbury, Bucks, Great Britain: Shire Publications.
- Craig, Barry and David C. Hyndman (editors)  
1990. Children of Afek: Tradition and Change among the Mountain Ok of Central New Guinea. Oceania Monograph no. 40. Sydney: University of Sydney.
- Crapanzano, Vincent  
1973. The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry. Berkeley: University of California.  
1980. Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Creedy, B.J.  
1968-69. Patrol #3 of 1968-69 to Moian and South Ok Tedi Census Divisions. Provincial Archives of Western Province, Daru.
- D'Albertis, Luigi Maria  
1880. New Guinea: What I did and Saw. London:
- Delbos, George  
1985. The Mustard Seed: From a French Mission to a Papuan Church 1885-1985. Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.
- Depew, Robert C.  
1983. "Musical Traditions of the Upper Fly River, Papua New Guinea." Unpublished M.S., Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, Boroko (Papua New Guinea).  
1987. The Aekyom: Kinship, Marriage and Descent on the Upper Fly River. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Edinburgh.
- Desowitz, Robert S.  
1987. New Guinea Tapeworms and Jewish Grandmothers. New York: Norton. First Publication, 1976.
- Drabbe, P.  
1959. Kaeti en Wambon, Twee Awju-Dialecten. Den Haag: M. Nijhoff.

- Dutton, T.E. and C.L. Voorhoeve  
1974. Beginning Hiri Motu. Pacific Linguistics, Series D: Special Publications, Number 24. Canberra: The Australian National University, Research School of Pacific Studies.
- Dwyer, Kevin  
1982. Moroccan Dialogues: Anthropology in Question. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dwyer, Peter D.  
1990. The Pigs That Ate the Garden: A Human Ecology from New Guinea. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Epstein, E.L.  
1983. "The Experience of Shame in Melanesia." JRLI 24:58.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E.  
1929. "The Morphology and Function of Magic." American Anthropologist 31: 619-641.
1937. Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Feld, Steven  
1982. Sound and Sentiment. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Fitzpatrick, P.  
1969-70. Patrol Report #8 of 1969-70 to South Ok Tedi Census Division. Provincial Archives of Western Province, Daru.
- Fortune, Reo  
1932. Sorcerers of Dobu: The Social Anthropology of the Dobu Islands of the Western Pacific. New York: Dutton.
- Frankel, Steven  
1986. The Huli Response to Illness. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Frith, Clifford and Dawn Frith  
1987. Australian Tropical Reptiles and Frogs. Townsville: Tropical Australia Graphics.

Fritzsche, Markus

1988. "Seriological Survey on Human Cysticercosis in Irianese Refugee Camps, Papua New Guinea." Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwurde der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Zurich. Insitut fur Parasitologie der Universität Zurich.

Galis, K.W.

1955. "Talen en Dialecten van Nederlands Nieuw Guinea." Tijdschrift Nieuw Guinea 16: 109-18, 134-35, 161-78.

Gardner, D.S.

1980. Cult and Ritual Organization among the Mianmin. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Australian National University.
1984. "A Note on the Androgynous Qualities of the Cassowary: or Why the Mianmin Say it is Not a Bird." Oceania 55(2): 137-145.
1987. "Spirits and Conceptions of Agency among the Mianmin of Papua New Guinea. Oceania 57(3):161-177.

Geertz, Clifford

1973. "Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols." In The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Gell, Alfred

1975. Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries: Umeda Society, Language and Ritual. New Jersey: Humanities Press.
1977. "Magic, Perfume, Dream..." In Ioan Lewis, editor, Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-cultural Studies in Symbolism. New York: Academic Press.

Gellner, Ernest

1964. Thought and Change. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Giay, Benny and Jan A. Godschalk

- n.d. "Cargoism in Irian Jaya Today." Unpublished M.S.

Godelier, Maurice

1977. Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology. Translated by Robert Brain. New York: Cambridge University Press.
1986. The Making of Great Men: Male Domination and Power among the New Guinea Baruya. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Godelier, Maurice and Marilyn Strathern (editors)  
1991. Big Men and Great Men. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goode, John  
1977. Rape of the Fly: Exploration in New Guinea. Melbourne: Nelson (in Association with Robert Brown and Associates, Papua New Guinea).
- Gourlay, K.A.  
1975. Sound-Producing Instruments in Traditional Society: A Study of Esoteric Instruments and their Role in Male-Female Relations. New Guinea Research Bulletin no. 60. Port Moresby and Canberra: New Guinea Research Unit and The Australian National University.
- Haan, R. den  
1955. "Het Varkensfeest zoals het plaatsvindt in het gebied van de rivieren Kao, Muju en Mandobo (Ned. Nieuw Guinea)." Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. 111:32-106, 162-190.
- Haddon, A. C.  
1920. "Migrations of Cultures in British New Guinea." The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. 50:237-2280.
- Harrison, Simon J.  
1990. Stealing People's Names: History and Politics in a Sepik River Cosmology. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Healey, Alan  
1964. The Ok Language Family in New Guinea. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Australian National University.
- Heider, Karl G.  
1969. "Attributes and Categories in the Study of Material Culture: New Guinea Dani Attire." Man (N.S) 4:379-91.
- Herdt, Gilbert  
1981. Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity, A Study of Ritualized Homosexuality. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Herdt, Gilbert (editor)  
1982. Rituals of Manhood: Male Initiation in Papua New Guinea. Berkeley: University of California.
1984. Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia. Berkeley:

University of California.

Hutchins, Edwin

1980. Culture and Inference: A Trobriand Case Study.  
Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Cognitive  
Science Series, No. 2.

Hyndman, David C.

1979. Wopkaimin Subsistence: Cultural Ecology in the New  
Guinea Highland Fringe. Unpublished doctoral  
dissertation, University of Queensland.
1984. "Hunting and the Classification of Game Animals among  
the Wopkaimin." Oceania 54(4):289-309.
1987. "How the West (Papua) Was Won." Cultural Survival  
11(4): 8-13.

Jackson, Richard

1979. "The Awin: Free Resettlement on the Upper Fly River  
(Western Province)." In C.A. Valentine and B.L.  
Valentine, editors, Going Through Changes: Villagers,  
Settlers, and Development in Papua New Guinea.  
Boroko, Papua New Guinea: Institute of Papua New  
Guinea Studies.
1982. Ok Tedi: The Pot of Gold. Boroko, Papua New Guinea:  
Word Publishing Company Pty. Ltd.

Jackson, Richard T., C.A. Emerson, and Robert L. Welsch

1980. The Impact of the Ok Tedi Project. Konedobu, Papua  
New Guinea: Papua New Guinea Department of Minerals  
and Energy.

Jones, Barbara

1980. Consuming Society: Food and Illness among the Faiwol.  
Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of  
Virginia.

Jorgenson, Dan

1981. Taro and Arrows: Order, Entropy, and Religion among  
the Telefolmin. Unpublished doctoral dissertation,  
University of British Columbia.
1990. "Secrecy's Turns." Canberra Anthropology 13(1):40-  
47.

Keesing, R.M.

1982. Introduction." In Herdt, editor, Rituals of Manhood.  
Berkeley: University of California Press.

1984. "Rethinking Mana." Journal of Anthropological Research 40:137-56.
- Kelly, John D. and Martha Kaplan  
1990. "History, Structure, and Ritual." Annual Review of Anthropology 19:119-150.
- Kienzle, W. and Stuart Campbell  
1938. "Notes on the Natives of the Fly and Sepik Headwaters." Oceania. 8:463-481.
- King, David  
1983. "Kiunga Revisited: 1983 Census of Kiunga." Research Paper in Geography, No. 8. University of Papua New Guinea. Published by the Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research, Waigani, Papua New Guinea.
- Kirsch, Stuart A.  
n.d. "The Yonggom, the Refugee Camps Along the Border, and the Impact of the Ok Tedi Mine." Research in Melanesia. Volume 13.
- Knauff, Bruce M.  
1985. Good Company and Violence: Sorcery and Social Action in a Lowland New Guinea Society. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Koch, Klaus-Friedrich  
1974. War and Peace in Jalémó: The Management of Conflict in Highland New Guinea. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Konrad, Gunter and Sukarja Somadikarta  
1975. "The History of the Discovery of the Birds of Paradise and Courtship of the Greater Bird of Paradise Paradisaea Apoda Novae Guineae." Irian: Bulletin of Irian Jaya Development. 4(3):12-30. Institute for Anthropology, Cenderawasih University.
- Kopytoff, Igor  
1981. "Knowledge and Belief in Suku Thought." Africa 51(3):709-723.
- Kracke, Waud  
1978. Force and Persuasion: Leadership in an Amazonian Society. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Lamb, K.P.

1977. "Copper Mining on the Ok Tedi and Upper Fly Rivers."  
In John H. Winslow, editor, The Melanesian Environment. Canberra: Australian National University.

Lawrence, Peter

1964. Road Belong Cargo. Manchester: University of Manchester.

Leenhardt, Maurice

1979. Do Kamo: Person and Myth in the Melanesian World.  
Translated by Basia Miller Gulati. Chicago:  
University of Chicago Press. Originally published,  
1947.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1966. The Savage Mind. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Levy, Robert

1973. Tahitians: Mind and Experience in the Society Islands. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, Gilbert

1980. Day of Shining Red: An Essay on Understanding Ritual.  
New York: Cambridge University Press.

1988. "The Look of Magic." Man (N.S.) 21:414-37.

Loffler, Ernst

1977. Geomorphology of Papua New Guinea. Canberra:  
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research  
Organization of Australia in association with  
Australian National University Press.

Lutz, Catherine

1988. Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lutz, Catherine A. and Lila Abu-Lughod (editors)

1990. Language and the Politics of Emotion. New York:  
Cambridge University Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1935. Coral Gardens and Their Magic. Two Volumes. London:  
Allen and Unwin.

- Marcus, George and Michael M.J. Fischer  
 1986. Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- May, R.J.  
 1984. Kaikai Aniani: A Guide to Bush Foods, Markets and Culinary Arts of Papua New Guinea. Bathurst: Robert Brown & Associates.
- McAlpine, I.R. and Gael Kerg with R. Falls  
 1983. Climate of Papua New Guinea. Canberra: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization of Australia in association with Australian National University Press.
- McDowell, Nancy  
 1988. "A Note on Cargo Cults and Cultural Constructions of Change." Pacific Studies 11(2):121-134.
- McElhanon, K.A. and C.L. Voorhoeve  
 1970. The Trans-New Guinea Phylum: Explorations in Deep-Level Genetic Relationships. Pacific Linguistics Series B - No.16. Canberra: The Australian National University.
- Meggitt, M.J.  
 1962. "Dream Interpretation among the Mae Enga of new Guinea." Southwest Journal of Anthropology. 18:216-229.
1974. "Pigs are our Hearts!" Oceania 44(3)165-203.
- Merrill, Elmer D.  
 1954. Plant life of the Pacific World. New York: Macmillan.
- Mihalic, Francis  
 1971. The Jacaranda Dictionary and Grammar of Melanesian Pidgin. Milton, Queensland: The Jacaranda Press.
- Morren, George  
 1986. The Minyanmin: Human Ecology of a Papua New Guinea Society. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press.
- Mowbray, David  
 1986. "Biological Impact of Ok Tedi Mine Tailings, Cyanide, and Heavy Metals on the Ok Tedi/Fly River Ecosystems in Papua New Guinea." Unpublished Paper, University of Papua New Guinea, Department of Biology.

- Murray, Hon. J.H.P. and S.H. Ray  
1918. "The People and Language between the Fly and Strickland Rivers, Papua." Man 24:40-45.
- Obeyesekere, Gananth  
1981. Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religions Experience. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Osbourne, Robin  
1985. Indonesia's Secret War: The Guerilla Struggle in Irian Jaya. Boston: Allen & Unwin.
- Paijmans, K. et al.  
1971. Land Resources of the Morehead-Kiunga Area, Territory of Papua and New Guinea. Land Research Series No.29. Melbourne: Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization of Australia in association with Australian National University Press.
- Papua New Guinea National Census  
1980. Final Figures: Census Unit Populations (Western Province). Port Moresby: National Statistical Office.
- Poole, Fitz John Porter  
1976. The Ais Aim: An Introduction to Male Initiation Ritual among the Bimin-Kuskusmin of the West Sepik District, Papua New Guinea. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University.
1982. "The Ritual Forging of Identity: Aspects of Person and Self in Bimin-Kuskusmin Male Initiation." In G.H. Herdt, editor, Rituals of Manhood.
- Prince, John and Moyra Prince  
1981. No Fading Vision. Hong Kong: Asia Pacific Christian Mission.
- Pula, Arai et al.  
1984. "Population Survey of the Border Census Divisions of Western Province." A report prepared for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Boroko, PNG: PNG Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research (IASER).
- Riesenfeld, Alphonse  
1946. "Rattan Cuirasses and Gourd Penis-Cases in New Guinea." Man. 28:31-36.

Rosaldo, Michelle

1980. Knowledge and Passion: Illongot Notions of Self and Social Life. New York: Cambridge University Press.

1983. "The Shame of Headhunters and the Autonomy of Self." Ethos 11(3):135-151.

Rosen, Lawrence

1991. "The Integrity of Cultures." American Behavioral Scientist. 34(5):594-617.

Ruddle, Kenneth, et al.

1978. Palm Sago: A Tropical Starch from Marginal Lands. An East-West Center Book. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Sahlins, Marshall

1981. Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom. Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, No. 1. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Sapir, Edward

1949. Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality, edited by D.G. Mandelbaum. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Schieffelin, Bambi

1990. The Give and Take of Everyday Life: Language Socialization of Kaluli Children. New York: Cambridge University Press. Studies in the Social and Cultural Foundations of Language, No. 9.

Schieffelin, Edward L.

1976. The Sorrow of the Lonely and the Burning of the Dancers. New York: St. Martins.

1980. "Reciprocity and the Social Construction of Reality on the Papuan Plateau." Man (NS) 15(3):150-156.

1982. "The Bau A Ceremonial Hunting Lodge: An Alternative to Initiation." In Herdt, editor, Rituals of Manhood.

1983. "Anger and Shame in the Tropical Forest: On Affect as a Cultural System in Papua New Guinea." Ethos 11(3): 181-191.

1985. "The Retaliation of the Animals: On the Cultural Construction of the Past in Papua New Guinea." In D. Gewertz and E. Schieffelin, editors, History and Ethnohistory in Papua New Guinea. Oceania Monograph no. 28. Sydney: University of Sydney.

Schieffelin, Edward L. and Robert Crittendon

1990. Like People You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Schoorl, J.W.

1957. Kultuur en Kultuurveranderingen in het Moejoe-Gebied. Den Hague: J.N. Voorhoeve.

1967. "The Anthropologist in Government Service." In D.G. Jongmans and P.C.W. Gutkind, editors, Anthropologists in the Field. New York: Humanities Press.

1970. "Muyu Land Tenure." New Guinea Research Bulletin No. 38. Boroko and Canberra: New Guinea Research Unit and The Australian National University.

1976. "Shell Capitalism among the Muyu People." Irian 5(3):3-72.

1978. "Salvation Movements among the Muyu of Irian Jaya." Irian 7(1):3-35.

1988. "Mobility and Migration in Muyu Culture." Bijdragen to de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde. 145:540-556.

- n.d. Culture and Culture Change in the Muyu Area. Translation of J.W. Schoorl (1957), Kultuur en Kultuurveranderingen in het Moejoe-Gebied. To be reprinted in the Translation Series of the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology at Leiden, The Netherlands.

Schwartz, Theodore

1973. "Cult and Context: the Paranoid Ethos in Melanesia." Ethos 1(2): 153-174.

Shweder, Richard A. and Robert A. Levine

1984. Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion. New York, Cambridge Press.

Silzer, Peter J. and Helja Heikkinen

1984. "Index of Irian Jaya Languages." Irian: Bulletin of Irian Jaya 12:1-125.

Sperber, Dan

1975. Rethinking Symbolism. Translated by Alice L. Morton. New York: Cambridge University Press.

1982. On Anthropological Knowledge. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stephen, Michele

1987. "Contrasting images of Power." In Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia, edited by M. Stephen. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Strathern, Andrew J.

1971. The Rope of Moka. New York: Cambridge University.

1975. "Why is Shame on the Skin?" Ethnology 14: 347-356.

Strathern, Marilyn

1988. The Gender of the Gift: Problem of Women and Problem of Society in Melanesia. Berkeley: University of California Press. Series on Melanesia, no. 8.

Student Research

1980. "Kiunga Fieldwork Report." Student Research Paper No. 4. Port Moresby: Department of Geography, University of Papua New Guinea.

Swadling, Pamela

1983. How Long Have People Been in the Ok Tedi Impact Region? Papua New Guinea National Museum Record, No. 8.

n.d. Plumes of Paradise. Unpublished MS.

Tambiah, S. J.

1968. "The Magical Power of Words." Man 3(2): 175-208.

1973. "The Form and Meaning of Magical Acts: A Point of View." In R. Horton and R. Finnegan, editors, Modes of Thought. London: Faber and Faber, Ltd.

1990. Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Taukruo, B.D. and G.T. Nurse

1978-79. "North Fly Cinico-Epidemiological Pilot Study." Goroka, Papua New Guinea: Institute of Medical Research. Mimeo.

Territory of Papua and New Guinea

1967. Electoral Roll: Electorate of North Fly. Port Moresby: Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

- Tuzin, Donald F.  
 1977. "Reflections of Being in Arapesh Water Symbolism." Ethos (5):195-223.
1980. The Voice of the Tambaran: Truth and Illusion in Ilahita Arapesh Religion. Berkeley: University of California Press.
1984. "Miraculous Voices: The Auditory Experience of Numinous Objects." Current Anthropology 25(5):-596.
- Ucko, Peter J.  
 1969. "Penis Sheaths: A Comparative Study" (The 1969 Curl Lecture). The Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute (2):27-67.
- Veur, Paul W. van der  
 1966. Search for New Guinea's Boundaries: From Torres Strait to the Pacific. Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- Voorhoeve, C.L.  
 1975a Languages of Irian Jaya: Checklist, Preliminary Classification, Language Maps, Worldlists. Pacific Linguistics Series B - No.31. Canberra: The Australian National University.
- 1975b "Central and Western Trans-New Guinea Phylum Languages." In S.A. Wurm, editor, "New Guinea Area Languages and Language Study," Volume 1 of Papuan Languages and the New Guinea Linguistic Scene. Canberra: The Australian National University.
- Wagner, Roy  
 1967. The Curse of Souw: Principles of Daribi Clan Definition and Alliance in New Guinea. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1972. Habu: The Innovation of Meaning in Daribi Religion. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
1981. The Invention of Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1984. "Ritual as Communication: Order Meaning, and Secrecy in Melanesian Initiation Rites." Annual Review of Anthropology. 13: 143-155
- Wallace, A. R.  
 1862. "Narrative of Search After Birds of Paradise." Proceedings of the Zoological Society, London, pps. 153-166.

Weiner, James

1986. "Men, Ghosts, and Dereaming among the Foi: Literal and Figurative Modes of Interpretation." Oceania 57(2):114-127.

Welsch, Robert Louis

1991. "Ningerum." In Terence E. Hays (volume editor), The Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Volume II, Oceania. Series editor, David Levison. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co.

1982. The Experience of Illness among the Ningerum of Papua New Guinea. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington.

1983. "Traditional Medicine and Western Medical Options among the Ningerum of Papua New Guinea." In L. Romanucci-Ross et al., editors, The Anthropology of Medicine: From Culture to Method. New York: Praeger.

- n.d.a "Cultural Continuities along the Upper Fly and Digul Rivers: Is there evidence for a Fly-Sepik Corridor?" Unpublished paper.

- n.d.b "Pig Feasts and Expanding Networks of Cultural Influence in the Upper Fly-Digul Plain." Unpublished paper.

Wheatcroft, Wilson

1976. The Legacy of Afekan: Cultural Symbolic Interpretations of Religion among the Tifalmin of New Guinea. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago.

White, Geoffrey

1985. "Premises and Purposes in a Solomon Islands Ethnopsychology." In White and Kirkpatrick, Person, Self, and Experience.

1990. "Moral Discourse and the Rhetoric of Emotion." In Abu-Lughod and Lutz, Language and the Politics of Emotion.

White, Geoffrey and John Kirkpatrick, editors

1985. Person, Self, and Experience: Exploring Pacific Ethnopsychologies. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Whitehead, Harriet

1986. "The Varieties of Fertility Cultism in Papua New Guinea." Part I and II. American Ethnologist 13(1,2):80-99, 271-289.

Wikan, Unni

1990. Managing Turbulent Hearts: A Balinese Formula for Living. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Womersley, John S.

1978. Handbooks of the Flora of Papua New Guinea, Volume One. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press on behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea.

Yandit, Kirine

n.d. "Toward Designing a Relevant Leadership Training Model with Reference to the Yonggom Church in the Upper Fly Area of the Western Province of Papua New Guinea." Unpublished Mimeo, Christian Learning and Teaching Center, Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea.

Young, Michael

1971. Fighting with Food. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1983. Magicians of Manumanua. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**Index**

- aamgono* 21, 184, 188, 189, 282, 284, 332
- amop* 85, 125, 140, 183, 274
- anger* 32, 53, 117-119, 122, 123, 144, 147, 152, 153,  
160, 168, 170, 324, 325
- arat* 13, 18, 23-26, 89, 161, 184, 189, 190, 202, 226,  
233, 264, 267-269, 290, 317
- at kawenepinbon* 109, 111, 130, 153
- Awin (Aekyom)* 27, 29, 40, 53, 101, 106, 158, 186, 206,  
254
- awon monbe* 74, 94-96, 101-104, 109, 110, 115, 144, 165
- biraande* 154, 155, 159
- bird of paradise* 34-38, 172, 205, 229, 309
- Boazi* 22, 27, 29, 186
- bom* 74, 79, 80, 82, 87, 88, 93, 94, 106, 114, 139, 164
- bom-mirim* 80, 87, 88, 93, 106, 139
- bop-mirim* 88, 101
- bridewealth* 17, 103, 133, 150
- Busse, M.* 22, 23, 27, 30, 37, 45, 159
- cargo* 34, 47, 52, 317-334
- cassowary* 12, 13, 16, 41, 61, 84, 91, 92, 134, 157, 158,  
177, 192, 193, 197, 205, 208-222, 224, 225, 226,  
228, 230, 233, 234, 241, 278, 280, 286, 299,  
301-303
- colonial* 1, 2, 13, 16, 31, 33, 38, 40, 44, 46, 47, 51,  
70, 112, 123, 184, 318-322, 324, 326, 328, 330, 334
- cowrie* 18, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 46, 47, 52, 96, 98,  
99, 102, 104, 189, 197, 229, 236, 290, 321
- deceit* 64, 122, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 167, 169, 170,  
313
- diap* 84, 197, 205, 213, 214, 217, 219, 220, 223, 280,  
286, 299, 301-303

- Dome village 5, 6, 20, 38, 50, 59-64, 66, 67, 69, 70, 81, 91, 100, 101, 130, 131, 141, 142, 144, 195, 220, 258, 259, 269, 299, 317, 329, 331, 332, 334
- dream interpretations 64, 125, 129, 135, 137, 147, 175-178, 198, 213, 227, 242, 261, 281
- emotion 119, 122, 130, 131, 144, 160, 335
- fear 47, 53, 54, 117, 119, 122, 137, 138, 142-145, 152, 154, 159, 185, 237
- feasts 12, 13, 18, 22-26, 29, 189, 190, 193, 226, 264, 267, 268, 290, 321
- gender 95, 121, 228, 265, 266, 293, 305, 307, 309, 310, 313-316, 328
- government 32, 37, 38, 40, 42-44, 46, 51, 53, 58, 59, 87, 101, 202, 236, 321-323
- history 16, 32, 41, 70, 111, 126, 320, 329, 333
- illness 54, 55, 64, 73, 74, 77, 79-85, 88-94, 108, 112, 113, 114, 116, 117, 122, 143, 160, 170, 173, 174, 175, 178, 183, 235, 252, 277, 284, 304, 324
- inamen 21, 78, 166, 167, 169
- indeterminacy 64, 113-116, 231, 237, 243, 250, 263, 282, 291
- Irian Jaya 1, 20, 158, 299
- Kaluli 64, 118, 119, 121, 164, 167, 171, 179, 180, 182, 211-213, 222, 281
- Kamberap 266, 267, 271-275, 286, 289-292, 294, 300, 306, 310, 311, 315, 317, 318, 328-335
- karak 160-165, 201
- kewot 98, 99, 101, 104, 105, 111, 153, 160, 164, 169
- kibirat 74, 88, 90, 91, 93, 95, 104, 108, 109, 154, 165, 302
- Kiunga 2, 7, 46, 49-51, 53, 56, 59, 62, 67, 76, 91, 104, 145, 146, 154, 155
- komon 217-220, 225-227, 232-237, 243, 248, 250-255, 263

- komot* 156-158, 174, 234, 241, 254, 255, 295, 304, 308, 309
- kubup* 85, 178, 189, 205, 228, 242, 264, 265, 271, 274, 275, 276-288, 291, 305
- kuman* 74-79, 82, 88, 94, 98, 100, 101, 103-105, 109, 114, 125, 139-142
- kumka* 74-79, 82, 87, 88, 94, 98, 104, 105, 111, 114, 125, 138-142, 167, 236, 291
- loss* 79, 117-119, 122, 125, 129, 131-136, 138, 139, 145, 170, 171, 174, 196, 199, 283, 284, 307, 325
- magic* 51, 52, 64, 74, 82, 158, 206-208, 216-221, 230, 231, 232, 235, 243, 246-252, 254, 255, 257-263, 281
- Mandobo* 27, 29, 31, 158, 186, 268, 321
- Marind* 22, 27, 29, 30, 37
- mimyop* 117, 122-132, 134, 136, 137, 139, 145, 147, 154, 171, 174, 196, 283, 284, 325
- Min* 30, 31, 159, 254
- mirim* 74, 79-82, 87-89, 91, 93, 94, 101, 106-108, 110, 111, 114, 136, 139, 143, 144, 154, 164
- Muyu* 1, 5, 8, 14, 29, 36, 46, 59, 179, 327, 331
- myth* 25, 63, 64, 129, 130, 158, 174, 178-182, 188, 190, 191, 211, 213-216, 221, 229, 234, 240, 241, 243, 254, 264, 266-268, 279, 280, 284, 285, 289, 290, 292-294, 300, 304, 308-310, 313-318, 326-335
- Netherlands New Guinea* 47
- Ningerum* 6, 7, 21, 27, 29, 30, 53, 84, 86, 137, 150, 158, 187, 254, 268
- nurin* 144, 145, 147, 148, 151-154, 168, 198
- od* 17, 18, 20, 25, 26, 47, 60, 63, 152, 183, 185, 189, 197, 229, 236, 290, 321
- OPM* 130, 131, 252, 253
- pig feast* 66, 89, 161, 184, 202, 233, 267-269, 317
- politics* 18, 21, 121, 330

- raids 22, 111, 142, 204, 302
- recursion 293, 312-314
- refugees 15, 20, 53, 59-61, 81, 100-102, 130, 140-142, 162, 195, 229, 235, 237, 269, 285, 299, 328-332, 334
- sago 9, 10, 12, 14, 24, 27, 30, 31, 53, 55, 57, 59, 66, 70, 76, 77, 96, 100, 104, 109, 127-130, 138, 139, 141, 153, 157, 162, 171, 183, 184-186, 188, 190, 198, 200, 201, 204, 205, 215, 216, 223, 224, 267-269, 272, 274, 279, 283, 288, 289, 295, 304, 308, 309
- Schieffelin, E.L. 64, 114, 118-121, 164, 167, 179, 180, 182, 211, 212, 281, 283
- Schoorl, J.W. 2, 4, 13, 15, 22, 23, 29, 35, 37, 38, 46, 47, 49, 52, 53, 135, 154, 179, 199, 217, 221, 234, 252, 253, 321, 323, 326, 327
- secrecy 263
- shame 122, 144, 147, 160, 161, 163-165, 170, 201
- sickness 199, 305
- sorcery 18, 22, 31, 47, 51, 54, 64, 73-75, 78, 79, 81, 82, 87-89, 91-94, 97-101, 103-107, 109, 110, 111-118, 122, 125, 130, 132, 136-144, 149, 152-155, 159-162, 164, 165, 167, 168-170, 178, 253, 258, 259, 290, 291, 302, 322, 324-326
- sorrow 117, 118, 122, 124, 131, 139, 145, 170, 171, 174, 196, 283, 284, 325, 331
- une 137-141, 143-145, 159
- unrequited reciprocity 115, 119, 130, 151, 169, 180, 181, 215, 216, 264, 266, 289-292, 315, 324, 328, 334, 335
- waruk 82-87, 90, 158, 208, 215-217, 226, 227, 232, 235, 237-248, 250, 251, 255, 256, 258, 259, 263, 274, 277, 281, 285
- Welsch, R.L. 18, 21, 27, 29, 56, 84, 86, 137, 150
- yawat 25, 64, 158, 173-175, 178, 179, 182, 188, 190, 199, 202, 214, 215, 228, 240, 242, 264-272, 274-277, 280, 282-289, 291, 293-318, 320, 327-329, 332